

THE GREAT ARGUMENT
OR
JESUS CHRIST IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

BY
W. H. THOMSON

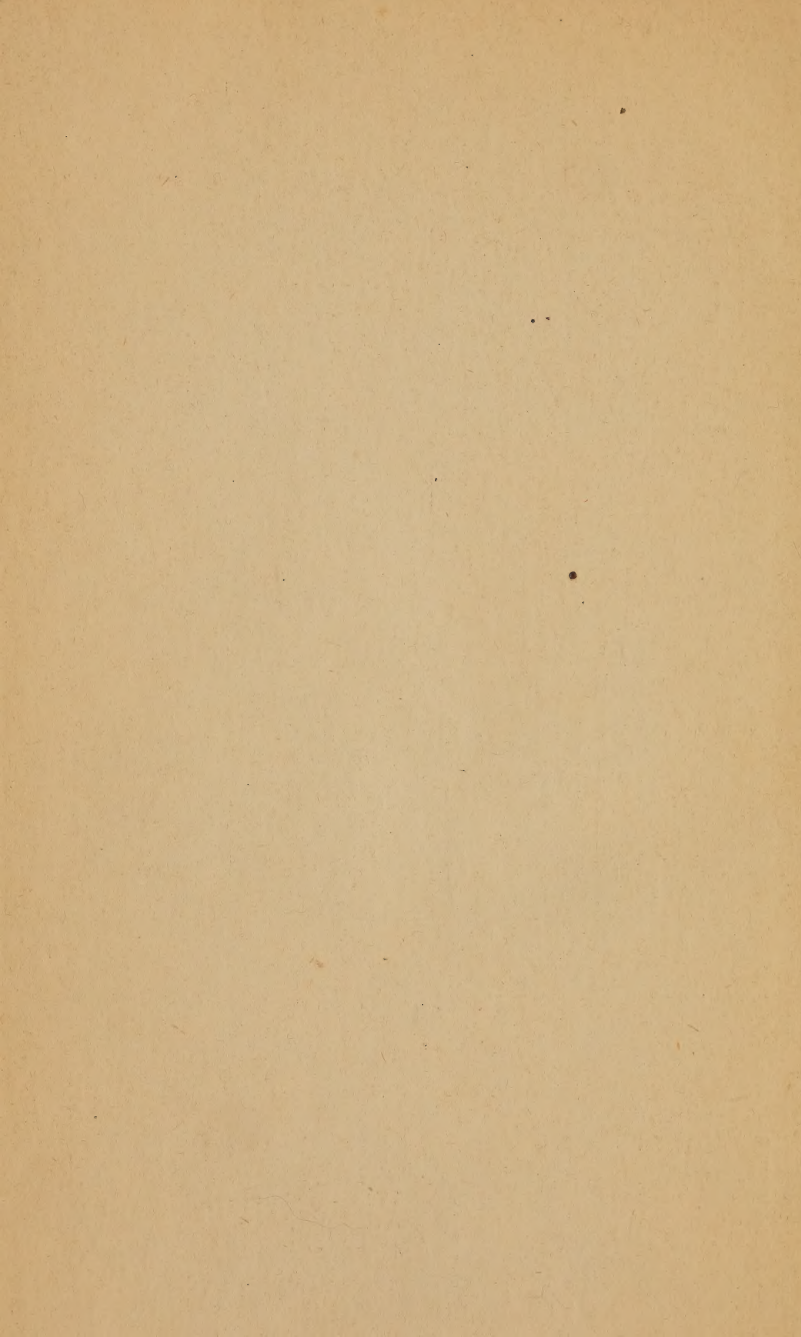
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The great argument

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INTRODUCTION.

ESTIMATED by the influence which they have exerted, there is nothing in the inheritance bequeathed by antiquity which can compare with the Sacred Writings of the Hebrews. Originally belonging to one of the most exclusive and isolated peoples of history, they are so stamped with the impress of the scenery, climate, and customs of their small and peculiar country that it would be difficult to cite an example of a literature apparently more local, and less likely to become the most read of books the world over. Their diffusion, however, is due solely to those few, mainly Galilean, Jews who went forth into the world appealing everywhere to their national Scriptures as the great sanction of their Messianic, or Christian, message. It was their preaching which caused the Old Testament to become so universally known and accepted; for otherwise it certainly would have remained within the narrow sectarian boundaries which still limit the Talmud, or like the Vedas of the Brahmins, have attracted the attention of only a few scholars.

But this fact, on the other hand, is the plainest testimony to an organic union between the Old Testament and Christianity. That the religion which they preached was something wholly new to the world would have been the last idea to occur to the first promulgators of the Gospel. Their theme was that Kingdom of Heaven whose

coming had been renewedly covenanted from on high throughout the ages past, and which was now no longer a prophecy, but a fact. Whether, therefore, they were persuading the Jew, or turning from him to the devout heathen, their common reliance was like Paul's in Thessalonica, when, "as his manner was, he went in unto them, and three sabbath-days reasoned with them out of the Scriptures, opening and alleging that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ."¹

Many in this age are too apt to allow the distance of time to obscure the living conception which actually animated the Apostles and sustained them throughout, and to ascribe to them instead more familiar modern views and motives. They did not teach ethics, or morals, but religion. They left no defined system of doctrines; for they were too much occupied with certain historical facts which led them to preach not Christianity, so much as the Person—Christ. They were teachers only in a secondary sense, for their message, instead of being the word of advice, was nothing less, as they believed, than the Glad Tidings of the Promise performed. In studying such a subject as the origin of the Christian religion, therefore, we must recognize the fact that it was owing to their birth and education that the Apostles were trained to accept an idea which none but Hebrews could have entertained, in the first instance, as they did. The whole Old Testament had to exist before a Peter, a John, or a Paul could have been produced, so that it was impossible for a Gentile to found or originate the Church. It was, in truth, the Hope and Consolation of Israel, the Hebrew Expectation, which had to prevail with the strength of generations born into it before that strangely potent convic-

¹ Acts xvii. 2, 3.

tion could have arisen which led those "fishers of men"¹ to forsake all—even their Judaism itself—for the sake of Him who came to "fulfil the Scriptures."

The Book of the Acts of the Apostles is one continued illustration of the efficacy of the Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament in converting multitudes to the religion of Jesus. But by this appeal to the Scriptures of the Jews, the founders of the Christian Church committed their cause to a line of argument whose soundness can be tested in our own age as well as in theirs, while the import of its conclusions, if demonstrated, would be felt as deeply in our day as at any former period. Nothing, indeed, could be so opposed to the fundamental principles of scepticism as this apostolic evidence from the supernatural fact of prophecy, because that scepticism derives its chief strength from the modern aversion to the miraculous in any form. Uniformity in the operations of nature, and unbroken continuity in the development of life, are assuming with many the position of demonstrated laws, claimed to be so invariable that not alone the supernatural is ruled out of human history, but scarce a function is left to the Deity himself. A real prophecy, on the other hand, is nothing less than a miracle, for it needs but a short train of reasoning to show that it differs so essentially from mere human prediction that a single unmistakable example of the kind would unsettle the very foundation of modern unbelief. A human prediction is never anything more than a guess of results or consequences to something in the present or in the past. It grows entirely out of experience, and can rest on no other basis for its premises, because men are as much bound to the present in time as they are to the earth's surface in space. But prophecy has no necessary

¹ Matt. iv. 19.

connection with experience, nor is it conditioned by it, for it involves a foreknowledge of that which no man may know unaided, any more than unaided he can step off the earth. A giant may ford a stream impassable to a dwarf, but stature becomes as nothing at the ocean shore, and so no sagacity or prevision avails when the expanse of the real future is before us, and we gaze into the depths which lie beyond the few steps which are all that it is possible for us therein to take.

Now the Apostles appealed to just this miracle of prophecy when proclaiming that God had prepared the world for the advent of Jesus Christ, because to him all the prophets gave witness, foretelling in many ways not only the Coming, but also its manner, time, and object, until not a fact about him which had relations to that object was without its corresponding prophecy. But if the life of Christ, in all its singular fulness of event, purpose, and results, was really written beforehand in the Hebrew Scriptures, then the conclusions as to the truth of the Gospel are too clear to be withstood by the mind of this or of any other age. For his was not a life which could have been thought out by human invention. It is so unlike any other ideal that nothing could be less probable than that any important element in the story of Jesus could have been composed in advance. To establish the truth of Christianity from the Jewish book of the Old Testament, therefore, requires that each distinctive doctrine in the New Testament about the person of Jesus should be found in the ancient Scriptures also; there foretold with such a completeness of statement and unmistakable intention that a candid mind can find for it none but the Christian interpretation. We propose, therefore, to subject this claim to examination in the following pages, being assured that it is well to take

heed to it' when seeking a true answer to the question put to men of every age, "What think ye of Christ?"

AUTHENTICITY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

Preliminary to this discussion, however, there are some considerations which seem to require that a reference be made to the subject of the authenticity of the writings which compose the Old Testament. The Christian Bible is so commonly regarded as one book that when some persons learn that the usually accepted authorship or date of particular portions has been called in question, a feeling of distrust is excited with respect to the whole Scripture, much as the reputation of an individual may be affected by the mere mention of unfavorable reports, quite irrespective of their foundation in fact. So long as this sentiment is entertained, it will occasion a certain mental reservation, which will operate continually to weaken the impression of any argument derived from the Bible itself; for nothing is so necessary to the acceptance of a proffered testimony as a belief in the thorough trustworthiness of the witness.

There is, nevertheless, one fact to be noted here which may seem to render it needless to enter upon the investigation of this subject at all,—namely, that if the Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament have suffered any alterations, not one of such supposed changes could have been made in the interest of anything Christian, because the book itself is a Jewish book, and existed in its present form for centuries before the birth of Jesus Christ. Moreover, the hostility which has separated from the beginning the Jewish and the Christian parties respectively is also a guarantee that no alteration has occurred since the Christian era, as neither side would have accepted a change

made for the benefit of its opponents. This consideration, while it renders the Christian's appeal to the Hebrew Scriptures an appeal to the most impartial testimony possible, at the same time indicates that questions of date or individual authorship have no necessary connection with his position.

It has been maintained, for example, that the Book of Isaiah is the production of at least two different authors; the first part, extending to chapter xl., belonging to the real Isaiah, who lived in the eighth century B.C., while the remainder is by an unknown writer of the times of the Captivity, about 500 years B.C.; the chief argument for which theory is the mention by name of Cyrus as the conqueror of Babylon and the restorer of the exiles. But if the prophecies which are to be found in chapters xlii., xlix., liii., and lv., and which were referred by the ancient Jews to the Messiah, do really refer, as the Apostles claimed, to Jesus Christ, are they any the less prophecies by Divine inspiration because they were inscribed 500 years B.C. instead of 750 years? The one and only question which needs to be decided here is not whether we are reading from Isaiah, but whether we are reading about Jesus.

Nevertheless, an examination of the evidence that the writings of the Old Testament are genuine, in the strict sense of the term, is not only a matter of great interest in itself, but is justified by the demands of Christian and sceptic alike. It is a great help to the faith even of the firmest believers to become acquainted with the extent and variety of the proofs which can be adduced that their Bible was truthfully composed throughout; nor should the honest sceptic refuse to examine those facts which show the difficulty of accounting for the Bible in its present form, if it be, to any serious extent, a collection of unauthentic documents.

We begin with a fact whose importance cannot be overestimated in such an investigation, and which constitutes one of the most distinguishing features of the Old Testament, and that is, its singularly composite authorship. Instead of dealing with one book, we find in it no approach to sameness in any recognized element of literary production. It has little in common, therefore, with the sacred book of another Shemitic religion; for the Koran, according to Mohammed, was conveyed to him alone, by the archangel Gabriel, direct from the Almighty, word for word, and vowel for vowel, in the Arabic language. Mohammedan theologians, therefore, are not willing to sanction its translation into other languages, and all Arabic grammar has to be modelled according to its infallible text. But, in complete contrast to this single personal testimony, the Old Testament stands as the work of many different authors, who wrote in different ages, in different places, and even in different languages, or in different ages of the same language. In each of these particulars, therefore, it affords a multitude of data for examination and verification such as we find nowhere else in literature; while each, in its turn, increases the difficulties of unauthentic composition.

The lapse of time, to begin with, between Moses and Malachi can scarcely be less than that which now separates the English-speaking peoples from the days of the Saxon Heptarchy. This fact alone renders it inconceivable that a collection of writings whose dates are ascribed to varying periods in such a long succession could be the productions of a comparatively late age, and not be palpable as such upon the slightest examination. An English analogue to the structure of the Old Testament, therefore, might be made up, in the first part, of the laws of Britain by Alfred the Great, followed by portions from authors

in the times of the Norman Conquest; other portions, again, written during the Wars of the Roses, to be succeeded in turn by poems of the age of Elizabeth, and then by essays in the reign of Queen Anne.

Moreover, in the case of the Old Testament, the number of its authors is no less remarkable than the prolonged period which it covers; so that it is doubtful if anything but an approximate estimate can be made of them. Genesis, for instance, is acknowledged by most scholars to show evidence of documents whose age probably long antedates that of the other books of the Pentateuch; the Book of Judges is plainly a recension of different narratives put together with little regard to chronological order. It must have taken at least 800 years to complete the Psalms, for, besides those ascribed to David, some are stated to be by Moses, Asaph, Ethan the Ezrahite, and many by anonymous authors, both before and after the Babylonian Captivity. The collection of the latter part of Proverbs is referred to the "men of Hezekiah," while the authorship and date of the last two chapters are wholly uncertain, etc.

Lastly, in distinction from our supposed case of an English parallel to the Old Testament, we have the fact that it is claimed to be the production, not of a single country, but dates from Egypt, the Desert of Arabia, Palestine, Assyria, Babylon, and Persia—lands whose condition and civilization were even more dissimilar in ancient times than they are now.

Therefore, a book which purports to be composed in such a fashion must fulfil the following conditions:

1. There must be as great a variety of literary style in it as there are authors.

2. The writers themselves should indicate their succession in time by quotation, reference, inference, or other-

wise on the part of the later from the earlier authors, in the same natural way, for instance, that Macaulay reveals his acquaintance with Shakespeare, Milton, Addison, and Byron.

3. The condition of the Israelites must have varied so much in the course of eleven centuries that the great changes of the times should be constantly reflected in the writings corresponding to each age.

4. The particular country in which each part was composed should be known by incidental as well as by direct proofs.

5. As languages are not permanent, but have their periods of development, maturity, decline, and extinction, on the one hand, and, on the other, inevitably record the history of those who use them, so should the Hebrew of the Old Testament not only illustrate all these stages, but, at the same time, offer a continuous commentary on the story of the nation itself.

1. *Diversity of Style.*

The mere statement of such conditions is enough to settle the question about the Old Testament as a whole; for there is nothing better demonstrated by their history than the impracticability of literary forgeries, however limited in extent or praiseworthy in intention, simply from the difficulties which either one of the above-mentioned conditions would alone occasion. In the first place, examined by the criterion afforded by the celebrated definition, "style is the man himself"—so certain is it to correspond to all that enters into or influences his mental and moral characteristics—it will be found that no two, out of the many writers in the Hebrew Scriptures, resemble each other more closely in this respect than in the case of any other national literature.

The author of Isaiah lv., for example, could never have written Zechariah xi. any more than the educated priest who composed the truly poetic but highly artificial triplets in Lamentations iii. 19-42, on Resignation, would have chosen such figures as the herdsman Amos uses in chapter iii. 12. Ezekiel, who was a contemporary of Jeremiah, resembles him no more as a writer or thinker than either of them resembles Daniel, who refers to the one, and is referred to by the other. Whoever studies the Psalms will soon learn the note of David, as a trained musician is able readily to recognize Beethoven. His personal manner of speech and direct appeal to God have little in common, as regards style, used in its wider sense, with the ecclesiastical tone of Asaph. The ninetieth Psalm stands alone, just as its great author rises before the mind in association with the heights of Sinai.

Such instances of thorough and genuine individuality, which no art can imitate or fancy create, might be multiplied indefinitely. The naturalness, so to speak, of the Old Testament in its variety of diction, corresponding to its variety of authors, needs only to be compared with the uniformity of the Koran to appreciate its significance. Mohammed makes Abraham, Moses, Jonah, and Jesus talk, preach, and exhort exactly alike, as if they were all Moslem sheikhs. The Old Testament, on the contrary, though wonderfully uniform in spirit, has all the diversity of nature in whatever pertains to personal or mental qualities.

2. *Dependence of the Later upon the Earlier Writers.*

As the Old Testament purports to have been a growth through many successive ages, so we find its component parts linked together to a remarkable degree by references and citations in matters of history, doctrine, or for simple

illustration. Retrospective allusions are the pre-eminent characteristics of these Hebrew writings on account of the continuity of a great religious idea—the peculiar national relationship to Jehovah—which leads the minds of each age to dwell upon the past for consolation in the present or hope for the future. No historian of imperial Rome ever referred to the days of the Republic to an extent at all approaching the manner in which the prophets, psalmists, and chroniclers under the kings of Judah and of Israel recall the days of their fathers.

The patriarchal tent, the Egyptian bondage, the wilderness encampment, the times of the Judges, the Shepherd King both psalmist and warrior, the apostasy which built up Samaria instead of Zion,—all recur again and again in the manifold imagery of a poetry unsurpassed for depth of feeling. And yet out of hundreds of such instances, these references, however incidental, to former events, persons, or writings, are not inconsistent with the assigned date of the particular author.

In many cases the later writers not only show, in various ways, their close intimacy with the legacies of their predecessors, but they also quote from or directly appeal to them. Thus Isaiah, in chapter ii. 2–4, transcribes the exquisite passage from the fourth chapter of Micah. When the priests attempted to put Jeremiah to death,¹ he was saved by certain elders quoting the precedent of Micah, who, one hundred and fifty years before, had prophesied the same things as Jeremiah about Jerusalem,² and, instead of being put to death, was heard by their fathers with grief and repentance. The occasion of the remarkable vision of Daniel recorded in chapter ix. arose, in its turn, from a study of the prophecy of Jeremiah seventy years previously.

¹ Jer. xxvi. 7–20.

² Mic. iii. 9–12.

Such facts and instances as these are so numerous that the dependence of the Old Testament writings upon one another may be correctly termed organic, each author using the Scripture as it was completed up to his time, just as in their day the writers of the New Testament dwelt upon the Old, and had it constantly in their thoughts.

3. Registering Historical Changes.

Closely allied to the argument from the preceding, and one of the widest and most varied of tests in itself, is the correspondence of successive writers to great changes in historic circumstance and experience. In the case of the Old Testament, the number of conditions that here must be fulfilled is unprecedented, on account of the extraordinary story of a people which has never ceased to be extraordinary, as it still exists, outliving antiquity itself. Nearly everything now styled old, like the Papacy or the Roman Empire, must yet be termed modern in comparison with the Jew. He stands like a tree in the field, where his Assyrian, Babylonian, Persian, Greek, and Roman conquerors appear by contrast only as changing crops. The rise to power of the earliest of these peoples occurs late in the composition of the Old Testament, and hence we find it illustrating, in its purely historical aspects, an experience as prolonged and as changeful as that of Europe itself since the Christian era.

To appreciate, therefore, the number of different historical conditions which the successive books of the Old Testament must correspond to, we need only glance rapidly at the different stages of the nation's progress. Beginning as the serfs of a foreign people, who held them under a highly artificial civilization, which in turn deeply influenced their subsequent development, we find them suddenly transformed into a nation of nomads like their

relatives the Arabs. Their next stage of national life resembled that of the Greek tribes some six centuries later, after the decay of the monarchical institutions of Homeric times, Ephraim holding a quasi-supremacy similar to that of Sparta before the rise of Athens.¹ The national-bond, however, was of the loosest kind, so that it failed repeatedly to protect them from the aggressions of their neighbors.

This was succeeded by a monarchy, consolidated only with difficulty by David, owing to the jealousy of the supremacy of Judah on the part of Ephraim, who had already begun to assume the distinctive appellation of Israel.² The old dangers, however, of the days of the Judges, from Philistines, Ammonites, Midianites, etc., now completely disappeared, nor was the time yet near when great conquering empires should appear on the stage. Under David's grandson, however, the ancient schism between Ephraim and Judah became complete, the Davidic dynasty becoming so much weakened that Jerusalem was long subordinate to Samaria. Civil war then desolated the divided nation for two centuries and a half, so that it fell at last a prey to the formidable powers which rose in the valley of the Euphrates; Nineveh, and then Babylon, choosing Palestine as their battle-field with Egypt.

The story culminates in the Babylonian Captivity, an experience which proved to be the most remarkable crisis in the life of any people. Then it was that the old Hebrew, who never went beyond the narrow limits of his native land, and was exclusively an agriculturist, frequently apostatizing also from the worship of Jehovah to,

¹ Judges viii. 1-3; xii. 1.

² 2 Sam. i.-v. See also the accounts of the rebellions of Absalom and of the son of Bichri, in both of which Israel was implicated in distinction from Judah.

that of all the idols he could find among his neighbors, became in one generation permanently changed into the modern mercantile Jew, the only true cosmopolitan of history; so that when Christianity was ready with her mission, she found that the Jew had preceded her everywhere, and raised the synagogue in uncompromising protest against polytheism.

It is inevitable that if we have documents which truly correspond to the different phases of such a record as this, we shall then find them illustrating it in all its parts, in the same manner that writers of the Elizabethan, Cromwellian, and Georgian eras in English literature reflect faithfully the circumstances of their own, and of no other, age. We venture to say, therefore, that, judged by this criterion alone, the Old Testament is, without doubt, the most ancient collection of documents in the world. It must have been written piecemeal through centuries of changing times and fortunes, and hence mirrors forth not only the expectations, disappointments, rejoicings, anxieties, and mournings of real life, but is all along a self-registering measure of time as well.

To commence with the four books which follow Genesis. We find in them the Egyptian experience alluded to with that kind of recent reference and absorbing importance which is natural to the feelings of a new nation. As the trials of the American Revolution were the great topic of the speeches on our national anniversary, before the greater convulsion of our own time, so every detail of the deliverance from the bondage of Pharaoh is made to do service towards perpetuating the national sentiment and ideal that Israel was the covenanted people of Jehovah. The whole composition of these books is permeated with Egyptian elements impossible to account for in the circumstances of any subsequent period.

It is difficult to imagine, for example, how any Hebrew, however gifted, belonging to the times of the prophet Samuel, could have been their author. At that age the nation had reached the lowest level in civilization of its whole history, and was wholly hemmed in by the warlike races which ravaged them on every side. It would therefore be an extraordinary miracle, even for that great prophet himself, living in his rude mountain village, to go back as far in time as we are removed from Chaucer, and create a Moses in the court of Pharaoh, or a Moses inditing his laws; for those laws abound throughout with the traces of an Egyptian ecclesiastical education.

Whoever wrote these books must have lived in Egypt both early and late in life; for his *incidental* allusions to that country prove, on the one hand, that observation of external nature which is peculiar to boyhood, while, on the other, his ritual shows the deliberate imitation of a mature law-giver. He, indeed, comes near to Palestine, but no nearer than the other side Jordan; for the Wilderness life is distinctively reproduced in these books in a way which shows that the writer was there, but not in the Promised Land; as we might imagine, in our own country, a native Californian writer who approaches the Mississippi from the Rocky Mountain slope, but never crosses that river; for there is as much peculiar to the Wilderness, and not to be found in Zebulon or Benjamin, as there is in Colorado and yet not in Illinois or Kentucky.

Following upon the time of Moses, we have the Book of Judges, which covers a period of about four centuries, and, from a purely literary point of view, is a composition of extreme interest. It relates a national experience analogous to that of Britain, from its abandonment by the Romans to the consolidation of the Saxon monarchy, characterized both by a retrogression from the Egyptian civil-

ization of the time of Moses, and by the varying fortunes of an unorganized and primitive people. We could not expect a systematic or connected historical production to emanate from such an age; for careful historians like Thucydides or Tacitus are produced only late in the development of a people or of a civilization. Scholars, therefore, justly doubt the authenticity of much of Livy's narrative of the early times of Rome, so complete and finished is his account of an age which naturally would record itself only in legends, fragments of warlike odes, or disconnected stories.

Now, whoever compiled the narratives of Judges, he shows no trace of the careful citation of authorities which marks the far later author of the Book of Kings; but, in correspondence to the circumstances of the age, presents us with the least systematic of all the historical books of the Old Testament. It ends with a narrative of the punishment of the Benjamites which should have appeared in the earlier portions, as the event itself happened in the days of the stern and pious generation which had just been commanded by Joshua; the then High-Priest being the same man whose bloody act is commended in the twenty-fifth chapter of Numbers. It is doubtful whether any other generation of Israelites would have behaved as that one did, just as there has been but one generation of Ironsides in England. In the twenty-second chapter of Joshua there is a curious account how these same Old Testament Puritans came near administering a similar chastisement to their brethren of Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh, from a misapprehension of their intention in raising a high-altar on the east bank of the Jordan; an event in itself belonging to that early period when commemorative piles of stones would be the most natural historic records.

The remainder of the book consists of a miscellaneous

collection of narratives which are as plainly archaic and belonging to a rude, unsettled society as can well be conceived; the Moabite, the Midianite, the Ammonite, and the Philistine being then the dreaded foes of Israel, as our English forefathers in Shakespeare's time spoke in awe of the Spaniard and the Turk. As might be supposed, the annals of such a period would be strikingly illustrated by the customs and idioms of the peasantry of Palestine at this day, because the most ancient survivals of this nature in any country are always to be found among its common people. The present writer can bear personal witness to the fact that, except certain narrative passages in Genesis, no part of the Old Testament so abounds as Judges with the oldest kind of thought and of expression, the significance of which can be best appreciated by hearing it anew in a Lebanon village.

Succeeding Judges, we have the native histories of the Hebrew monarchy, beginning with the two books called after Samuel, and which correspond to the period intervening between the close of the era of the Judges and the middle of the reign of Solomon. The references to the heroic age of Samuel, Saul, Jonathan, and David are characteristic of a writer belonging to a time when the memory of a condition of things, then rapidly passing away, was nevertheless still recent, much as Roman writers under Augustus Cæsar still reflect the impress of the Republic.

With Solomon, the Hebrew king became an Oriental Sultan, far removed from the people, and surrounded by court and government officials. Hence the much later author of the Books of Kings invariably mentions official titles as he speaks of King David, King Solomon, Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, etc. But the author of Samuel as constantly testifies to his earlier and simpler age by saying Saul, David, Samuel, Joab, Zadok, etc. In

Kings the monarch always rides, even an Elijah the Tishbite running before his chariot. In Samuel we do not read of Saul or of David riding once in their lives, though David repeatedly captured immense numbers of chariots. The priestly author of the later book complains constantly of the worship in high places which many of the best kings of Judah failed to suppress; but in the earlier history, even the great Samuel himself, as well as all others, are represented as going up to high places without a thought of wrong. After the Temple was built, however, it became a test of loyalty to Jehovah to go there only to sacrifice. The bitter feeling of the orthodox party, therefore, grew apace against an ancient and beautiful custom; but which the turns of history, by the time of Hezekiah, had identified with the secession of Ephraim and the sin of Jeroboam.

Such changes of sentiment in religious matters belong to the whole experience of the world, and are in themselves measures of successive time. To most devout minds, doubtless, in the later days of the prophets, the thought of their pious ancestors going up to worship Jehovah, like the votaries of Baal on the mountain-tops, was as incongruous as it is now to many in New England that their Puritan ancestors took their jugs of rum to church, or that such a great divine as John Newton could have engaged in the African slave-trade.

Moreover, we can scarcely fail to recognize in the composition of the history in Samuel the thoughts and utterances of a contemporary, fully illustrated as they are by the Psalms of David himself. While David's kingdom had not one European element in it, we can yet find it reproduced in all its parts so soon as we enter an Asiatic world of action, especially in the history of the kindred Arabic race. The surroundings of such a throne are coun-

cillors who have somehow risen to an exaggerated and proverbial fame for wisdom; also dervishes, or sacred characters of various kinds, and sometimes wise women, who are curiously revered by Orientals much on the principle of contraries; and, lastly, there is always a crowd of assassins.¹ Polygamy, also, is invariably a murderous institution, so that the annals of Eastern courts not only abound with recurrent fratricide, but with the conspiracies of fathers and of sons against one another. Some years ago, the present Sultan of Muscat succeeded where Absalom failed, and mounted the throne after he had stabbed his father with his own hand.

Whoever has associated with the Druze sheiks of Mount Lebanon, whose courteous and dignified manners accord ill with their reputation for blood in Syria, will sooner or later well understand the character of Joab the son of Zeruiah. Every day of his public life, David knew that he had about him men whose words of friendship went along with calculations as to the advantage of killing him. Had we, therefore, a collection of Oriental lyrics, expressing truthfully the feelings of a man, as real poetry does, and yet find no trace of fear in them of his fellow-man, nor aspirations that his enemies be confounded, we might conclude that the author was some recluse, but certainly never that he was an Eastern king.

The era of that remarkable body of men, the Hebrew Prophets, coincides with the greatly altered circumstances of the post-Davidic centuries. They never cease to lament the disastrous enmity between Ephraim and Judah, and the forsaking of Jehovah, which the policy of the Israelitish kings favored in order to keep their subjects from resorting to the Temple in Jerusalem. New dangers, also, were rising from the changed course of the his-

¹ 2 Sam. xiv. 2; xx. 16.

tory of the world, as this was the time of the appearance of great universal monarchies. Assyria was ruining the nations with her cruel religious wars, the monarchs of Nineveh being accustomed to ascribe their victories to the power of their gods over the deities of all other peoples.

As each nation had then its peculiar divinities, and Jehovah was God only in humbled Zion, his dispirited people were in constant danger of losing their faith in him and turning to the apparently greater patrons of the triumphant heathen. Against this tendency of their dark times the prophets heroically contended; and there is nothing more wonderful or touching than the faith which, often in the midst of their saddest passages of denunciation or foreboding, still rises to the assurance that the knowledge and worship of their national Jehovah will yet spread like the waters of the sea over the whole earth, and that many strong nations from afar shall invite one another to go up to the house of the God of Jacob to learn of him the ways of peace.¹

There can be found nowhere such vivid pictures of contemporary history as in Micah, Isaiah, or Jeremiah. While Nineveh and its cities remained buried, Voltairian critics of the last century claimed that the Greeks knew more of ancient history than the Hebrews! But scarce an inscription or representation obtained now from the long-entombed oppressors of Israel fails to bring the prophets nearer to us, and to illustrate the singular nobleness in the rejoicing of those seers at the coming of another David, who was not to destroy the stranger, but to bless him. The beautiful lament of Jeremiah fitly closes the unmatched tragedy of old Hebrew poetry, the composition of men of whom the world was, indeed, not worthy.

¹ Micah iv. 2, 3.

Daniel and Nehemiah head the long historical list of Jews who have risen to distinction in foreign lands; and the most cursory perusal of their writings is sufficient to indicate the great change to which we have referred as the result of the second bondage after Egypt. Every author who corresponds to this era manifests all the contrasts to the writers who preceded it which the nature of the case demands. The visions of Daniel are wholly unlike those of Isaiah, and the narrative of Nehemiah is as different in tone, as well as in subject-matter, from a chronicle of David's or of Hezekiah's period as the Jews of the Dispersion have always been unlike the Hebrews before it. With the rebuilding of Jerusalem and a return of a portion of the nation, a secondary revival of the prophetic line occurs with the appearance of Zechariah and Malachi; but it is easy to note from a glance at their writings that they mark "the sealing-up of the Vision."¹

¹ It is not intended by the foregoing to assert that no part of the Old Testament appears to belong to a later date than that which is claimed for it, but rather that, taken as a whole, it abounds with all those varied and undesigned correspondences with time and place which only genuine writings can show.

We need, therefore, but allude here to the recent revival by Kuenen of views long ago advocated by Eichhorn and other German rationalists, down to Rosenmüller and De Wette, on the composition of the Pentateuch, and now popularized in English by the lectures of Prof. Robertson Smith. The absence or paucity of references to the laws of Moses during the political period of Israel, between Samuel and the later kings, proves, we are told, that the Book of the Law was unknown before its alleged discovery in the Temple by the High-priest Hilkiah, during the memorable reformation by Josiah (2 Kings, chapter xxii.), and that the ritualistic practices of prophets, priests, and kings through the previous centuries show that they were wholly ignorant of either Leviticus or Deuteronomy. It is difficult to account for so much apparent reliance upon this now antiquated theory when its essential feebleness is demonstrated by the most familiar facts of history. Because, if we are to apply its principles to other cases, we must inevitably conclude that the Bible itself was composed by Martin Luther at *his* Reformation, instead of its one copy

4. *Correspondence to Varying Circumstances and Conditions.*

The great characteristic of Shemitic, in distinction from European languages, is their wealth in objective terms, such as those pertaining to mountains, hills, rocks, or plains, or the names of the more familiar animals. In Arabic the terms descriptive of hills or moderate eminences alone exceed several hundred, and in like manner the Hebrew vocabulary bears witness to a constant observation of all the phases and aspects of the outer world. The book of Job, which partakes of the characters of each of these races, treats of the greatest themes of human experience in terms which show that the speakers were dwellers under an Eastern sky, where every physical feature is re-

being found by him, according to the legend, ignominiously chained to a post. Otherwise, "it is incredible" that the Church, throughout all lands and for centuries, should have worshipped pictures and images "without a suspicion" that this practice was forbidden as idolatrous in no less a passage than the Ten Commandments. How came the Virgin, also, to be so universally worshipped, even more than Christ, in face of the apparently studied slight upon her claims repeatedly put in the mouth of the Saviour himself (Matt. xii. 48; Mark iii. 33; Luke viii. 21, and John ii. 4)? Moreover, how came the Church to call the Bishop of Rome the Holy Father, "wholly unconscious" of the injunction of Christ, "Call no man your father upon the earth, neither be ye called masters" (Matt. xxiii. 9, 10), while bishops bore the rank and title of lords and princes, with their palaces and even castles and soldiers, though St. Paul (Phil. i. 1) addressed his letter to the *bishops* of the small church of Philippi? etc. Indeed, it can be shown easily that the whole Christian Church either was "wholly ignorant" of, or else systematically violated her New Testament to a far greater extent than this theory claims that the Hebrews did with their Pentateuch. A disputatious critic, in fact, might say that, from an historical standpoint, the argument ought to be reversed, for as there is no known instance of *any* code of laws being observed for more than three centuries by any people without serious departures from its rules, or "irregularities" arising in practice, therefore the "irregular" sacrifices in their troublous times by Samuel and by the first kings prove, rather than disprove, the existence of a more ancient ritual which continued to be violated until a reformation became necessary.

vealed in a strong light, so that thought is always in the closest relationship with the impressions of sense. Both the narrative and the poetry of the Old Testament, therefore, are based upon the phenomena of nature and the facts of daily life to an extent beyond that of any literature in the West, either ancient or modern.

With respect to the books written in Palestine, out of a multitude of passages we would refer, merely for illustration, to 1 Sam. xii. 16-19, where Samuel thus calls God to bear witness in an extraordinary manner to his words. "Now therefore stand and see this great thing, which the Lord will do before your eyes. Is it not wheat-harvest to-day? I will call unto the Lord, and he shall send thunder and rain." Thunder-storms of the heaviest description are common enough in Palestine, but what terrified the people here, so that they all besought Samuel to "pray for thy servants unto the Lord thy God, that we die not," was its unheard of occurrence in wheat-harvest. To parallel this in America we should have the reaping interrupted by a fall of snow, for while mid-summer thunder-storms often interfere with the labors of the American farmer, not a shower is expected in Palestine from the middle of May to September, and as no preparations are ever made for such an event, it would occasion not only serious loss, but be regarded as a plain token of Divine wrath.

Such examples from the Old Testament might be multiplied through many pages, because the Land of the Bible remains in all its own features, and in the abiding peculiarities of its social life, a matchless witness to the genuineness of the Scriptures which were there written.²

¹ Compare Mark xiii. 15, and Acts x. 9.

² The reader may consult for this purpose "The Land and the Book," by Rev. W. M. Thomson, D.D., father of the present writer; the illustrations of the Bible from this source constituting the theme of the work.

The correspondences also of the non-Palestinian books of the Old Testament with their surroundings are not less striking. No contrast, for instance, can be more complete than that between the rugged surface of Canaan and the fated level of Egypt; the one with its great winter rains and water-spouts, and small, inaccessible streams, sunk in deep gorges; the other a plain where a very slight elevation condemns the soil to unending barrenness, because everything depends upon the Nile. Where the Palestinian, therefore, speaks of the cattle on a thousand hills, the Egyptian king dreams of kine coming up out of the river to feed on the marsh reeds.¹ In the one country a house should be founded on a rock, in the other it may be built of bricks made with straw. In Palestine, when the Jordan overflowed, the neighboring districts dreaded an incursion of lions;² in Egypt the river bank is the resort of the princess and her maidens,³ as well as of the king and of his court.⁴

The districts of Lebanon, Hermon, Bashan, Galilee, and Mt. Ephraim so abound in natural strongholds that to this day they contain as many distinct and hostile communities as in the days of Moses; Egypt, on the other hand, is the natural birthplace of uniformity, centralization, and class organization. The first question, therefore, asked of a stranger in Palestine was, Whence comest thou?⁵ while in Egypt it was, What is your occupation?⁶ because where all the acres are equally flat, all the distinctions must be personal or conventional. In Egypt, therefore, the individual is withdrawn in order to maintain the heavy weight of the official, so that it is still the immortal Pharaoh from Abra-

¹ Gen. xli. 2, not "meadow," as in the Authorized Version; their feeding on *grass* would be the natural mistake of a Palestinian.

² Jer. xlix. 19, and l. 44.

³ Ex. ii. 5.

⁴ Ex. vii. 15.

⁵ Judges xvii. 9, and xix. 17; 2 Sam. i. 3, etc.

⁶ Gen. xlvii. 3.

ham and Joseph down to Moses. Palestinian writers, however, particularize the Pharaohs.¹ Towns in Palestine were built by some sheikh or chief, the only exception being in the days of Solomon, who in many things imitated the ways of Egypt against Moses' express commands;² but in Egypt the Israelites "built for Pharaoh treasure-cities."³

These are only a few of those incidental contrasts which may be so increased by attentive examination that it would be difficult to resist the evidence that the compiler or author of the Pentateuch breathes the air of Egypt with the simple unconsciousness of all natural breathing; a Palestinian forger would inevitably show the same embarrassment which instantly appears when the respiration is intentional.

Passing over the centuries, we again meet with sacred authors amid foreign and diverse surroundings; the river-side, unusual as a resort in Palestine, being the scene of the vision of Ezekiel,⁴ and also of Daniel.⁵ The peculiarity of Palestine is not the size of its streams, but rather its extraordinary fountains, which, in many parts of the land, burst out, each a new-born river by itself. The Jordan rises from seven such "depths," as Moses well termed them;⁶ that at Dan, which wells up out of the crater of an extinct volcano, being one of the largest fountains of the world; its cold waters descending by hidden channels from the snows of Hermon above until they reach the old courses of the fiery streams which once came from below.

The Leontes and the Orontes, the only equals of the Jordan in Syria, also owe their existence to similar foun-

¹ 1 Kings xiv. 25; 2 Kings xxiii. 29; Jer. xlv. 30.

⁴ Ezek. i. 1.

² Deut. xvii. 16; 1 Kings x. 28.

⁵ Dan. viii. 2.

³ Ex. i. 11.

⁶ Deut. viii. 7.

tains: the Orontes springing at once from under a large rock in a Lebanon gorge, a powerful torrent scarcely fordable within a few yards of its appearance. Naaman was justly proud of the waters of the Pharpar for the same reason. The Palestinian prophet, therefore, had ready at hand an unequalled type for that spiritual Fountain whose pure sources, deep in the mount of God, were yet to pour forth their living streams, more than enough for the cleansing of the whole world.¹

But Daniel and Ezekiel lived, like Moses, among the oppressors of Israel, where their eyes constantly met with the emblems of great world-powers whose civilization differed from, but was scarcely inferior to, that of the older Pharaohs. We now possess some of the works of art of those peoples, which, spite of their strangeness, are yet very impressive in their conception. The captives from Canaan, as they approached the palace of an Assyrian monarch, had to pass between colossal figures of stone, which typified, in the massive limbs of the bull, the great wings of the eagle, and the lofty, cold, but kingly head, the resistless might, the swift progress, and the consummate skill of their heathen conqueror. The pitiless and hitherto invincible Assyrian, whose policy led to the crushing of all national feeling by the cruel process of deportation, seemed to need some figure more than human to represent him; and thus, after the experience of the forced Eastern sojourn, we find a change in Old Testament imagery.

In the visions of Daniel we meet with forms wholly unlike anything which occurred to the imagination of a Habakkuk or a Jeremiah. They were each extraordinary but significant and complete types of the empires which were to succeed the Assyrian in desolating the earth, and

¹ Zech. xiii. 1.

it is no small evidence that the Book of Daniel does not belong to the later age when Greek art was predominant, to find his conceptions so wholly influenced by Assyrian and Babylonian ideals. On the other hand, there were in these creations certain elements of grandeur to which Greek art never attained, and which seemed not unworthy of suggesting to the genius of Ezekiel the striking imagery of his vision by the Chebar.

We have chosen these illustrations of the relation between the writings and the scenes of the Old Testament on account of their incidental character. In allegories or romances there are no undesigned coincidences, while in the case of true narratives events never occur singly, but involve accessories for which no ingenuity can provide. As not the smallest particle of wood, or of bone, or of tooth can ever be made, because the intimate structure of that which has been part of a growth must show a multitude of interdependent cells and textures which no skill can think of reproducing, so we cannot examine any true history of the life of an individual, or of a race, without finding unimaginable correspondences and mutual relations, and these ever multiplying as the examination becomes more minute; while fictitious histories, on the contrary, are destroyed with the first removal of their exterior.

But, in addition to all this, the Old Testament is peculiar for the extraordinary number of its specific geographical details. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are not represented as visiting imaginary places or dealing with ideal personages, like the pilgrims of Bunyan, but their memoirs in Genesis connect them not only with the facts of every-day life in their country, but with altogether too many localities for the needs of either fictions or legends. Again, Moses' itinerary in Deuteronomy is as full in its speci-

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fications of places as any published narrative of a great modern expedition, like Napoleon's march to Moscow.

The conquest of Joshua also is followed, in chapters xv. to xxii. of that book, by an enumeration of the distribution of the cities, towns, and villages of the land as detailed as the celebrated Doomsday-book which was made in England after the Norman Conquest. In Galilee, Mt. Ephraim, and Judea there still survive scores of the names of places which we find in Joshua, so that far more of the geography of Palestine, as it was thirty-five centuries ago, can be restored now than can ever be expected for the geography of the Greece of Solon or the Italy of Camillus.

Many religious readers are perplexed sometimes with the purpose or utility of the numerous elaborate genealogies in the Bible, which in some cases take up more space than the most extended discourses of our Saviour. Regarded, however, from an historical standpoint, they have just that relation to the story of the remarkable people from whom we have derived our religion which the remains imbedded in the crust of the earth have to the question of former geological periods. Some persons, under the pressure of theoretical exigencies, maintain that the mountain masses of fossils were created just as we find them in a single week; but this view does not require any greater strain of faith than the theory of other minds who fail to see in the slowly accumulated strata of the Hebrew Scripture one great reason why it should be well named the Old Testament.

5. *Evidence from Language.*

The life of a language invariably corresponds to the life of the race which employs it. In the youth of a people, its speech possesses a vigor and a vivacity which, in more mature times, may be regarded as quaint and un-

polished, but never as weak. So, also, the period of greatest development in a language is found to coincide with the middle and post-middle ages, when the intellectual life of the people is analogous to the parallel stages in the life of an individual. But just as the words of a man enable us to judge of his education and antecedents, so should the diverse elements and influences which have moulded the character of a nation be recorded in its unconscious and daily utterance. As Sir Walter Scott humorously illustrates it in the opening chapter of "Ivanhoe," the battle of Hastings caused the oxen, sheep, and swine to remain Saxon until they were fit for the master's table, when they turned into French beef, mutton, and pork.

In like manner, all the great changes which the past four centuries have witnessed in the political and social development of the English-speaking peoples are to be found faithfully reflected in the English tongue. In the times of Chaucer, the Anglo-Saxon race numbered less than the present population of the State of Ohio; and if it be difficult now to read the English of Chaucer, still less easily could we recognize the English people of his day, for the words of our ancestors cannot possibly be stranger to us than they would be themselves. The new experience of each generation since the middle of the fifteenth century has contributed something either to the vocabulary or to the idiom of our speech; so that there is not a writer of note in our literature whose time cannot be made out by his words alone. Language, therefore, must not only embody history, but also have a settled chronology as well.

The application of these considerations to the original language of the Old Testament is obvious. As the Hebrew nation changed, so must the Hebrew language have changed, sometimes slowly, sometimes rapidly, according

to each phase of the national destiny. Now the actual facts of the case are that, in this respect of language, the Old Testament may be likened to some of the great architectural remains to be found in Palestine itself. The foundations are of an old massive character, with the stones hewn after a fashion which has never been imitated since. Above these the eye takes in at one view an impressive illustration of historic changes, each ruling race in the long succession adding to or modifying the original structure according to its own style, while in the latest and most imperfect work of all, some of the oldest stones are to be found built in with the most modern.

Beginning with the Pentateuch, we discover in it abundant traces of the Egyptian stage of Hebrew story. The recognition of this element has necessarily been of recent date, owing to the fact that not until the researches of our own time was it possible to know what language the Egyptian serfs heard from their masters. With each step gained, however, in deciphering the writing of that long-extinct people, the language of the Pentateuch has become clearer; so that words which occur in it, whose origin such a scholar as Gesenius pronounced, thirty years ago, difficult to explain, are now found in their native form in the papyri of European museums. These words or phrases, moreover, occur so incidentally, or in unpremeditated connections, that nothing but a prolonged sojourn of the people at an early period in Egypt can account for their presence in the language.

After the same fashion, scholars have tracked the wanderings of the Gypsies, from their first haunts in India to England, by finding French, German, Bohemian, Magyar, Greek, and Persian words becoming mixed with, or successively added to, their proper speech, which, it is well known now, is a dialectical descendant of the Sanscrit.

No people can really dwell with another in the land without leaving its mark on language, even if it be too wretched a race to leave anything else; and thus the future philologist might be able to affirm, without contradiction, that the fathers of the American people must somewhere have had Gypsies among them, because that low class of words "chap," "pal," and "jockey" are pure Gypsy words of Hindoo origin.

If the Hebrews, therefore, really once lived in Egypt, they should show in their language pure Egyptian words, and not low ones either, but rather those connected with the arts of life or government. This we find to be the fact particularly in those books of the Old Testament which corresponds to the Egyptian age of the nation.¹

But, apart from its Egyptian words, the Hebrew of the Pentateuch is characterized by forms and idioms which must have sounded to the contemporaries of David very much as the English of our Bible sounds to us. When we read in our version such a sentence as this, "The brazen altar, and his grate of brass, his staves, and all his vessels, the laver and his foot,"² we are reminded that the neuter possessive pronoun did not exist formerly in our language. In like manner, when David studied the law of Moses, he must have noted that the Hebrew feminine pronoun *hea* used in his time was not used by the generation which came out of Egypt, the pronoun *hoo* doing duty in the Pentateuch for both the masculine and the feminine gender. There are also many words which are found in the Pentateuch alone, or else in quotations from it in the Psalms, or, as is familiar in other languages of long life, they reappear among the last authors in point of time,

¹ The reader may consult, on this subject, the able article by Canon Cook, on "Egyptian Words in the Pentateuch," in the "Speaker's Commentary."

² Exod. xxxix. 39.

who affect the earliest idioms with the pedantry characteristic of the second childhood of a literature.

The Books of Samuel correspond in time to the most flourishing period of the Hebrew nation, when David had raised it from an unorganized condition to the position of the strongest people in Western Asia. In keeping with its age, therefore, we find the style of this historical work simple, clear, and forcible, and of remarkably pure Hebrew, without the foreign admixture which appears in later books. After the division of the nation, however, both Israel and Judah began to be overpowered by two Shemitic nations—first the Syrian kingdom of Damascus, and then the Assyrian of Nineveh. The prevailing idiom of the widely spread but cognate races, which extended from the confines of Persia to Palestine, has been termed by scholars the Aramaic, and divided, for convenience, into the Eastern Aramaic, or Chaldee, and the Western, or Syriac, dialect. It would be natural, therefore, that the Hebrew, originally an offshoot from the Aramaic, should show the traces of Aramaic political domination to a greater extent than when it was under the sway of the more foreign speech of Egypt. Indeed, it is doubtful whether the common vernacular, in distinction from the literary language of the people, did not retain deep traces of its Syrian origin from the earliest periods in the composition of the Old Testament.¹ In the Books of Kings, therefore, which were composed at a much later period than the Books of Samuel, the narrative being brought down to the times of the Captivity, we find the Hebrew affected more and more by its Eastern relatives; the introduction of Aramaic terms, phrases, and idioms progressing with each generation until, finally, when the nation itself was deported to Babylon, Daniel composes

¹ Cf. Deut. xxvi. 5.

a part of his book wholly in the Chaldee language. Ezra, also, in quoting a royal decree, does not translate it into Hebrew, but gives it in the original Chaldee, because his people could then read it as readily as the second generation of German emigrants in America almost universally read the President's messages in English.

After the great change wrought by the Captivity, the days of the Hebrew as a living language were soon numbered. The style of Zechariah and of Malachi betrays the scholastic stiffness of old age, similar to that which is noticeable in the Latin of Boethius and Sidonius Apollinaris, who composed during the last days of Rome. It was inevitable that the Jews of the Dispersion could not preserve Hebrew except in the family or in the synagogue; but no language can long survive if it be kept exclusively indoors. While the nation was independent and secluded in Palestine, its idiom might be maintained with much the same steadiness as its relative the Arabic, which is still spoken in its classical forms in the highlands of Nejd in Arabia. But after the transplantation to Babylon, only a few generations sufficed to render the Chaldee Targums of the East and the Greek Septuagint version of the West absolute necessities. The times had become wholly different, and therefore books written in the style and language of Isaiah could no more have appeared under the successors of Alexander than it was possible for Judas Maccabeus to have resembled King Uzziah. The various writings, therefore, which came after the closing of the Old Testament canon, and which collectively go under the name of the Apocrypha, were composed in the literary language of their day, the Greek. They correspond to their age just as the Hebrew books respectively correspond to theirs, and hence, whatever their other uses may be, they render it impossible to doubt that the whole of the Old

Testament must be much older than they are; for they rest upon it as conformably as ever one geological stratum rests upon its predecessor, though the changed circumstances of their day impart to them their own distinct texture and color.

From whatever point of view, therefore, we regard this historic test of language, the result is still to substantiate the authenticity of the Old Testament. A book written by many successive authors, from the youth to the old age of a language, is in one sense an autobiography by the nation itself, and hence required ages for its completion. But, on the other hand, it cannot be expected, from the nature of the case, that, upon the lapse of twenty-five or more centuries after the language has been dead, some linguistic anatomists may not arise with learned doubts. We can readily imagine that a Shakespearian play like the "Merchant of Venice" may afford to certain scholars, some three thousand years hence (if their rules of criticism then bear any resemblance to some in ours), abundant materials for creating a pseudo-Shakespeare who followed the great dramatist by three or more centuries. For constructing such a theory, these rules would only require that about ten or twelve words be found in that play which are not to be found in any other extant fragment of Shakespeare, but, on the contrary, occur five of them in an idyl of Tennyson, and the remainder in a piece ascribed to the American poet Longfellow, and hence most likely betray an American origin. Similar conclusions as to the date and authorship of different portions of the Old Testament, based upon this kind of reasoning, are common in the works of certain modern critics; but they count little against the cumulative evidence of innumerable literary, historic, and linguistic coincidences, which, each in their own way, testify to the long succes-

sion of ages in the composition of the Hebrew Scriptures.

6. *Documentary Evidence.*

Besides the internal indications of authenticity thus rapidly sketched, we have a singular variety of independent and documentary proofs that the Old Testament existed in its present shape long before the birth of Christ. There is, in the first place, one incontestable fact which suffices to set the seal of antiquity on each of its books from Genesis to Malachi, and that is that translations and versions of the whole, without the omission of a single one in the Canon, were completed and in use, in all parts of the world, in the third century B.C. To find, at any one time, the same Scriptures received everywhere among the widely dispersed Jews is proof enough of their having been long known previously, and therefore that interpolation or forgery could have had a place, if at all, only at a much earlier period.

It is this consideration which lends such interest to the translations of the Old Testament, which were made after the Captivity for those who had lost the ability of reading their Scriptures in the original, owing to their residence in foreign lands. Of these, the most extensively spread and influential was the celebrated Greek Septuagint version, so called from a tradition that it was made by seventy elders sent from Jerusalem to Alexandria, at the request of the King Ptolemy Philadelphus, who wished to have a copy of the Hebrew sacred writings for the great Alexandrian Library. All authorities are agreed that it was made in Alexandria in the first half of the third century B.C., and that it was called for especially by the growth and importance, at that age, of the colony of Jews in Egypt, who so highly prized it that the distinguished Alexandrian Jew Philo states that an an-

nual festival was held by them in Alexandria to commemorate its completion.

By means of this version, not only were the Jews, who lived in every important city from the head of the Mediterranean to Spain, enabled to enjoy their Scriptures as a living book, but it also became a powerful instrument for the spread of the Gospel in its time, when the Apostles met about every synagogue a multitude of Gentiles whose minds had become already prepared by it to receive their message of the fulfilment of the prophecies in the person of Jesus. When Christianity was first promulgated, therefore, we find that in Palestine, Asia Minor, Greece, and Italy, the Old Testament was quoted according to this version with the same universal acceptance that King James's English version is now quoted from in every part of the world where the English language is spoken, thus testifying as much to its long-established use as to its diffusion.

Meanwhile for the Jews of the East, living in Arabia, Babylonia, and Persia, a somewhat different class of versions arose, from an ancient custom of having the Scriptures expounded at the synagogue in the vernacular by men appointed for the purpose, who were termed *mutergemin*, or interpreters. From being originally oral expositions, there arose in time several written paraphrases, as they may be termed, of which there remain two prominent examples, very highly venerated by the writers of the Talmud—namely, the Chaldee Targums of Jonathan ben-Uzziel and of Onkelos. The date when these Targums were reduced to writing is uncertain; but as they transmit to us the ideas and expositions of the ancient Jews about their Scriptures, it is interesting to note that many of the prophetic passages were unhesitatingly applied by them to their expected Messiah, which modern

Jews, since the coming of Jesus, explain as applying to some one else.

The apostle Paul's bold expression before Agrippa, "for this thing was not done in a corner," might well be applied, therefore, in another sense, to the case of a book which, so soon as its people had become cosmopolitan, was to be found translated by them into the leading languages of the world, and thus disseminated in the countries both of the farthest East and of the West. But as that people became cosmopolitan early in the fifth century before the birth of the Founder of Christianity, their testimony is surely not a vain one to the existence of these Scriptures as the ancient cement of their indissoluble nationality.

To the earlier portions of the Old Testament we have an unimpeachable documentary witness more ancient still. Interposed between Judea and Galilee, and occupying the capital of the old kingdom of Israel, there existed in the time of Christ the hostile sect of the Samaritans. The rancor of the feud which obtained between them and the Jews is repeatedly illustrated in the New Testament. True to their claim as descended from the ancient kingdom of Israel, which warred against the dynasty of David, they rejected all the Scriptures which belonged to the Davidic and post-Davidic centuries, and rested their faith on the Pentateuch alone, which was the common inheritance of the nation before the secession of Ephraim. Their true date, however, does not extend beyond the sixth century B.C., as their nationality was made up of the remnants left from the captivity of the ten tribes by the Assyrians, commingled with the heathen peoples brought from the East to colonize the land, according to the well-known policy of the Ninevite monarchs.¹ On the re-establishment of the Jewish state and polity by

¹ 2 Kings xvii. 24.

Nehemiah, the Samaritans were excommunicated by the Jews, as nothing better than pseudo-Israelites, with the result of engendering an hereditary hatred between the two sects which lasts to this day, although there are but few families left, at present, of this singular people, living in the city of Nablus in Palestine, to witness to it. This little community of scarcely more than one hundred and fifty souls clusters about Mount Gerizim and the tomb of Joseph with a tenacious vitality which of itself suggests some relationship, however slight, with old Israel; but so long as one of them exists, they cannot admit that Moses and the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob do not belong exclusively to them. But this survival, insignificant as it is in itself, nevertheless, historically speaking, is one of the interesting phenomena of the world. While nothing but lifeless remains testifies to the Egypt and Assyria of antiquity, the Samaritan still lives to display his copy of the Pentateuch.

For a time after the Samaritan Pentateuch was first studied by European scholars, a natural tendency existed to rate its renderings as equal, if not superior, to the received Hebrew text; but a general agreement now obtains that its variations are too slight to count much on either side, and are readily explicable from the long isolation of the race. Considering, indeed, the extraordinary interval since the possibility of there having been any community of feeling or of worship between them and the Jews, it is strange that such a small and constantly diminishing people could have preserved their sacred books so remarkably as they have done.

Beyond all other means, however, of preservation throughout the immense stretch of time which has passed since the closing of the Old-Testament canon, these writings have had one watchful guardian, the like of which

has been denied to the splendid literature of Greece, as well as to every other of antiquity. Mr. Grote laments that the classic treasures come to us now like remains of a noble wreck strewn on the ocean shore after a storm; but, surviving all the commotions of the troubled sea of history, there continues still, and more flourishing than ever, the people to whom the Old Testament was delivered. To cherish and preserve it intact was the heart-purpose of this exceptional race; and however likely this sentiment might tend to fanatical vagaries which in some respects may seem puerile to us, yet the one practical result has been that, on their account, time could not wear away one jot or one tittle of the Law.

No labor was too great for their scholars that would tend to insure the integrity and permanence of the sacred text. They record how many verses there are in each book of the Old Testament, and the middle verse in each; also how many verses begin with particular letters or begin and end with the same word, or contain a particular number of words and letters, or particular words a certain number of times. They noted that certain words are to be found so many times in the beginning, middle, or end of a verse, or with a particular construction or meaning; also, what particular words might be subject to mistakes in transcribing, also their vocalization and accentuation, and how many times they occurred so vocalized and accented. As regards the letters, they computed how often each letter of the alphabet occurred in the Old Testament, with comments on all the unusual letters.

How ancient was the predominance of this sentiment in the minds of the Jews may be gathered from the remarks of their great historian Josephus, himself a contemporary of the Christian Apostles. "With us," he says, "in contrast to the contradictions of Greek history (I should

be a busybody if I would teach those who know better than I how Helanicus differed about genealogies from Acusilaus, or how Acusilaus corrects Hesiod, or how Ephorus points out that Helanicus in most things lied, and Timæus as to Ephorus, and subsequent writers as to Timæus, etc.), there are not myriads of books inharmonious and conflicting, but two-and-twenty books only, containing the records of the whole time, and rightly believed to be divine. Of these, five are those of Moses, which comprise as well the matters of law as the account of the generations of man to the time of his death. This period is little short of three thousand years. But from the death of Moses to the reign of Artaxerxes, King of Persia after Xerxes, the prophets after Moses wrote what was done in their time, in thirteen books. The four remaining books contain hymns to God and suggestions to men as to their lives. From Artaxerxes down to our own times, events have been recorded, but they have not been accounted worthy of the same credit as those before them, because the exact succession of prophets existed no longer.¹ And it is evident, indeed, how we stand affected to our own writings. For, *so long a period having now elapsed*, no one has dared either to add to or to take away from them, or to change anything: it being a thing implanted in all the Jews, from their first birth, that they should account them as oracles of God, and abide by them, and, if need were, gladly die for them.”²

This holding fast to the Scriptures, as it may be termed, very early originated a peculiar, and in every way remarkable, literature, which itself took a thousand years to complete its cycle. The Talmud is a supplementary but distinctively Jewish Bible, based throughout, in its minutest features, on the Old Testament. Modern scholarship is

¹ An allusion to the books of the Apocrypha.

² Josephus, “Contra Apion.”

awakening to the importance of this strange collection of writings as a sort of great literary moraine descended from the ancient heights of the Old Testament, its relations to which are well illustrated by a passage in the celebrated essay of the late Mr. Emmanuel Deutsch.

The origin of the Talmud, he says, "is coeval with the return from the Babylonish Captivity. One of the most mysterious and momentous periods in the history of humanity is that brief period of the Exile. What were the influences brought to bear upon the captives during that time, we know not. But this we know, that from a reckless, lawless, godless populace, they returned transformed into a band of Puritans. The change is there, palpable, unmistakable—a change which we may regard as almost miraculous. Scarcely aware before of the existence of their glorious national literature, the people now began to press round these brands plucked from the fire—the scanty records of their faith and history—with a fierce and passionate love—a love stronger even than that of wife and child. These same documents, as they were gradually formed into a canon, became the immutable centre of their lives, their actions, their thoughts, their very dreams. From that time forth, with scarcely any intermission, the keenest as well as the most poetical minds of the nation remained fixed upon them. 'Turn it and turn it again,' says the Talmud with regard to the Bible, 'for everything is in it.' *Search* the Scriptures is the distinct utterance of the New Testament. The natural consequence ensued. Gradually, imperceptibly almost, from a mere expounding and investigation for purposes of edification or instruction on some special point, this activity begot a science—a science which assumed the very widest dimensions."

It is scarcely possible, indeed, to conceive a more varied combination of influences to render unalterable and un-

changeable the form of Scripture. As the life-period of all religions far exceeds that of dynasties or of nations, so no purely literary interest can compare with a religious sentiment for insuring the continued preservation of ancient writings. And when to all these is added the unique vitality of the Hebrew race, as if an undying Custodian had been specially provided for the integrity of the Old Testament, it must be confessed that the Christian argument therefrom may be properly claimed as based, in one sense at least, upon the "SURE WORD OF PROPHECY."

THE GREAT ARGUMENT; OR, CHRIST IN THE OLD TESTAMENT.

CHAPTER I.

THE PROMISE TO THE PATRIARCHS.

THE title of the Book of Genesis affords but little indication of its real character and import. In accordance with the apparent design of its author, it could be properly termed the Lives of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; for their story so far preponderates that the memoir of Jacob alone occupies more than a half of the whole book. Its style, moreover, is pre-eminently that of simple biography, in contrast either to doctrinal or to allegorical composition, the narrative being replete with details of thoroughly personal interests and experiences, and rendered peculiarly attractive by the charm of its naturalness.

Through the veil of human story, however, the real theme of the book soon appears in the unfolding of a great Divine purpose, to which alone is due the exceptional significance of patriarchal history. With the revelation of this fact, the simple domestic details of tent life become connected with all human interest, because to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is ascribed, not only a special relation to God, but also to the destiny of the world itself. In no other historical connection is the element

of futurity so interwoven with the fabric of the narrative. The Patriarchs are represented as living, not for a present possession, but sustained by faith in a very distant prophecy. The declared design is for them to the last unfinished; the "heirs of the world"¹ remain with only a burying-place in the land, pilgrims and sojourners to the end, holding to the promise of a good, through them, to all men, which they knew could be fulfilled only after they were long gone themselves from the earthly scene.

The chief aim of the book, therefore, is to narrate the beginning on earth of a special work of God with reference to mankind. Regarded in this aspect, however, the perspective of Genesis, so to speak, becomes quite different from some modern conceptions of its scope. It was not written, primarily, to furnish an account of the creation of the universe, nor of the earth, nor of the origin of man, nor of any other properly scientific subject. These questions are treated of in Genesis in a wholly introductory manner, solely according to their relative importance to the central principle of the book, and hence they are often suddenly dismissed whenever a fuller account of them would seem to entail too wide a digression. Considering, moreover, the great interest which is excited by these subjects, it would seem as if only the excluding influence of a specially dominant topic will account for the brevity and conciseness of the earlier portions of the Book of Genesis, which furnish the chief occasions for alluding to them. Elsewhere these questions have given rise to every variety of myths and of speculations; but the temptation to satisfy a natural curiosity about them appears to be constantly checked by the limitations imposed by the main theme. The account of the creation itself

¹ Romans iv. 13.

is compressed into singularly few and simple sentences, while it is plain that every section which follows prepares the way for the revelation of God, not as the Creator and Ruler so much as God the Covenant-maker.

We are rapidly carried, therefore, over long ages, to a comparatively late period in the development of the world, ere we reach the era of the Patriarchs. Instead of appearing near the beginning of history, the author represents mankind as already far advanced in that distribution and settlement which have ever since continued without notable change. The respective races, therefore, had been long divided into distinct nations, and time enough had elapsed to show what relations they would inevitably hold to one another if left to themselves.

It is thus plainly at this point that the true departure for the history of Genesis takes place, because it is the history of the beginning of human as well as of Divine reconciliation. In addition to, and as a result of the darkening of the knowledge of God himself, no prospect of deliverance to the world from its own incurable violence could be discerned in any direction previous to the day of the Covenant, because the causes of human strife were both universal and self-perpetuating. War and slavery were everywhere and constant, since all races so partook in the incessant struggle for dispossession that even the thoughts of the best and the wisest men of all the Old World had to be occupied chiefly with the defence against invasion. When successful war affords the only guarantee for security, the warrior is prized as much for the safety of his strength as for the glory of conquest. Hence it is difficult to conceive how any natural limits to the hostility of mankind could have arisen where every interest, equally of self-preservation as of acquisition, co-operated in enhancing the estimation of the sword.

Nor did any such limits, or anything approaching to them, ever arise. It is a fact of much significance that real kindness towards foreigners is nowhere to be found in any human literature, except in some connection arising out of the story of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. On the other hand, race hatreds and prejudices appear to be so inevitable that modern civilization itself has succeeded but imperfectly in modifying them. National insolence, moreover, is so natural an outcome from certain universal human tendencies that every leading historical people has shown, in its speech, manners, and laws, an increasing contempt for other nationalities in direct proportion to its own advancement or success. Under all flourishing civilizations, therefore, down to the modern Anglo-Saxon, the fate of the weaker or of the subject races has been a hard one, from the absence of any feeling that would counteract the ancient mental attitude of the different families of man to one another. Most impressive on account of its singularity, therefore, becomes the sentiment expressed in the call of Abraham, for it is here that we meet with the first new thing in the weary repetition of human thought and conduct, in the words of the great Promise, "*In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.*"

That this unexampled idea of a good for the whole world is at once the subject and the explanation of the lives of the Patriarchs becomes evident from the passages which record the Divine intention in the choice of each of these three men. In regard to Abraham himself, its first announcement constitutes the otherwise abrupt beginning of the narrative of his life in Genesis xii. 1-3: "Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee; and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy

name great ; and thou shalt be a blessing : and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee ; and *in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.*"

In keeping with the characteristic conciseness of style above alluded to, we are introduced at once by this passage to the first of the Patriarchs, with the Covenant of the world already made ; no items of his previous personal history being added except his descent. As an illustration of character, no greater proof of his simple trust could be given than his forsaking of home and kindred ; because in ancient life this tie was indispensable. To this day, the unsettled state of society over the greater part of Asia, including Abraham's birthplace itself, causes the number and power of the family clan to be matters of the utmost concern to every individual, because to it he must look, almost exclusively, for protection, either as regards property or life. Throughout the East generally, the interference of the government to punish a murder is not only unexpected, but almost regarded as an infringement upon the family right of avenging its own blood feuds. The sway of law among ourselves, on the other hand, has greatly diminished the importance of kinship in many ways ;¹ but particularly in the safety of migration from country to country, which, once possible only to armed multitudes, can occur now with such insignificant risk that the faith of Abraham is little appreciated when he left behind him every protection known to his age, and

¹ The relics of such a state of society, when the right of kinsmen to avenge wrongs was admitted, did not disappear from English law until after the beginning of this century. In 1818, Lord Ellenborough, in full court of King's Bench, decided that the challenge to the defendant in the case to mortal combat in court, on the part of a certain aggrieved relative of the plaintiff, was a valid and legal mode of trial, and a special Act of Parliament had to be passed to prevent him from asserting it ! Barnwall and Alderson's Reports, vol. i. p. 405, *In re Ashford v. Thornton*.

went forth as the sole example, for thousands of years, of an unexiled and peaceful emigrant.

The next clause indicates the mode by which the design should be accomplished of Him who alone can form an historical design. The life, not only of an individual, but of generations, is too short for a purpose of such vast scope as the Promise to the Patriarchs. Neither could a blessing which was to extend to the whole dispersion of human families come through a system, so to speak, whether social, political, or philosophical, because all systems, as such, are limited in duration, and still more limited in extent or prevalence. All schools of thought are bounded by narrow national, or, at best, race lines. The Oriental, whether Turkish, Chinese, or Malay, seems incapable of sharing fully with the Europeans either in institutions or literature. The more the subject is pondered, in fact, the clearer will it appear that a plan with such transcendent aims could be realized only through some organic growth, like a strongly individualized nationality, and hence requiring, as does the growth of a nation, many centuries for its development. We shall have full occasion hereafter to show how remarkably the subsequent institution of a national Israel served the great purpose of preserving, as nothing else could, the knowledge of God in the world, until the world was ready for its universal acceptance.

In this connection, however, we may very properly call attention to the absolute and unconditional statement of future events which occurs in this and in many another passage in the Pentateuch as well. With no reservation whatever, the fact is foretold here that the name of Abraham would be made great; and so it has fully proved. Without having been either warrior, conqueror, lawgiver, or author, or identified with any events aside from those of his peaceful tent life, nevertheless the name of Abra-

ham is actually more widely known and revered at this day than any other name on earth. For it is not alone throughout great Christendom, or by the widely dispersed nationality of the Jews, that this prophecy is fulfilled. While the most celebrated names of either ancient or modern Europe and of America are scarcely heard beyond the Bosphorus, the great races of the Mohammedan world, from China to Tangiers, send annually their pilgrims to the tomb of him who bears the unequalled title of *El Khuleel*, or the Friend of God. The reasons for this remarkable fact are not far to seek, as they appear in the words of this passage which usher in the appearance of the man himself. The inseparable idea connected with him is that of blessing, reiterated in this brief but pregnant oracle in four different connections; and it is due to this exceedingly different relation to men that he holds, compared with those names which are famous and nothing more, that already the most diverse families of men find their only common meeting-place at the Cave of Machpelah.

The second passage in which the distant ideal of the patriarchal life is expressed occurs in the mysterious connection of Genesis xviii. 17, 18: "And the Lord said, Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do; seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and *all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him?*" This narrative, indeed, seems to have for its chief object to illustrate the peculiar relation which Abraham held to God in behalf of a sinful world, because of his connection with the coming blessing to all nations. It is this which imparts to him the great dignity of sharing in the counsel of the Almighty—a relation which would be far too high for any mere man like Abraham to hold but for his identification with the Divine purpose itself.

The final ratification of the Covenant with Abraham occurs under circumstances of the highest solemnity, on the occasion of the offering-up of Isaac as recorded in Genesis xxii. 15: "And the angel of the LORD called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time, and said, By myself have I sworn, saith the LORD, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea-shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; *and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.*" After such an unequalled test of that trustfulness with which Abraham so honored God, it may seem strange that he should be rewarded with no new or added promise, but only with a repetition of the one made many years before he came to Canaan itself, and for the first sign of which he had waited so long. But what could be greater than the future bound up in Abraham? This very fact, that nothing could be added to it, even on this occasion, illustrates how the one principle of the Covenant overshadows everything else in the lives of the Patriarchs.

The heirship of Abraham's Covenant fell to his son Isaac. Particular pains are taken in the narrative to indicate that Ishmael should not partake, as the Mohammedan world believes that he does, of that which should be the distinctive inheritance of the family.¹ That the birth-right to this did not involve the heirship to the family estate, but was something very different from the temporary possessions of this life, is soon strikingly exemplified in the history of Isaac's two sons. Accordingly, in Genesis xxvi. 4, it is with Isaac that the Covenant is ratified in the same terms as to his father: "And I will make thy

¹ Gen. xvii. 17-21; xxi. 12, 13.

seed to multiply as the stars of heaven, and will give unto thy seed all these countries: *and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.*"

It was this inheritance, the world's Covenant, and this alone, which the unbelieving Esau despised. The contrast between him and his brother lay very deep in their respective natures. Esau never thought of selling his birthright to his father's property for a mess of pottage, for he never had the least occasion to do so; because, in that age, he who wielded the sword had supreme authority concerning the patrimony, as in time he did. When Isaac was old, the archer Esau had four hundred men under him, and lived the life of a rich emir. The plain man, who dwelt in tents, had little chance of contending with him, and finally was obliged to flee with nothing but his staff. It was the strange heirloom of the Promise, which was so utterly ideal and so very distant, that Esau made light of, and to it preferred a present supper, in a spirit, and doubtless in a manner, characteristic of all the Esaus since.

To be a blessing to all the families of man is not a conception over which the man of the world could ever become enthusiastic. Back of the duplicity of the imperfectly enlightened Jacob, therefore, with his careless but violent brother, is to be seen an appreciation and a faith that showed which way the real blood of Abraham coursed. Jacob did believe in the distant promise, and prized it, because he had in him that which could share in its spirit, and which Esau had not. This, therefore, is the explanation why, in spite of his sin, whose fruit rendered all his days evil,¹ he is met in his loneliness with the great vision of Bethel, to receive the Promise to Abraham in all its fulness—that through him, in turn, were all the families of the earth to be blessed.

¹ Gen. xlvii. 9; xxviii. 14.

It may be objected, however, that the language of these passages, detailing the terms of the Covenant, expresses little that is distinctive or peculiar to them. It was very common for ancient peoples to possess oracular sayings, which were claimed to have come down from their legendary ancestors, foretelling a great national future. In all ages and countries where a devout credence in prophecy is universal, it comes about very naturally that not only each country, but also each city, or even single families of rank, are well supplied with traditional predictions of that which the future has in store for them. It is readily asked, therefore, in what respect these patriarchal promises of mighty and prevailing descendants, who are to possess the gates of their enemies, differ essentially from the multitude of like prophecies in ancient times?

To this it may be replied that this objection would hold good if the Promise in Genesis, in its true essence, bore any real resemblance, either in its personal connections or in its central thought, to the ordinary human aspirations which are of a national or patriotic kind. On the contrary, it should arrest attention because it is so wholly unlike, and markedly contrasting in all its proper and distinctive features, to any such ideals, whether of the Jewish race itself of the time of Christ, or ideals of Roman or Sanscrit or Teutonic origin, or any others that can be named. Compared with the sameness of legendary heroes of every clime and age, who are nothing if not warriors, and with the sameness of principle, which is that of exaltation *at the expense of*, not for the blessing of, all other races, we have no trace of a conqueror here, in the ideal of the Patriarchs; we find, instead, a perfect consistency to the Christian conception of men kept up to the end. Unresisting, submitting to wrong,¹ preachers of righteous-

¹ Gen. xxvi. 14-17.

ness, their pure and sacred lives offer too complete a contrast to the portraitures of legendary heroes to allow of their being classed in any sense with them.

It is true that those terms of the Covenant which promise a great national increase and triumph over enemies are identical, apparently, with the form and spirit of purely heathen oracles. But the greatest untruths are frequently nothing but true statements taken, as it were, by themselves. The one great thought here is unquestionably that of blessing. It is not only "I will bless thee," but also "Thou shalt be a blessing," of course to others. And that this becoming a blessing is not to consist simply in being the ancestor of a great nation is shown by the next clause in the Promise, that all who should bless Abraham should be themselves blessed for such a frame of mind towards him. It is impossible, therefore, not to see in this language, even if it stopped here, a Divine design which was to extend through Abraham to all the world, and which was to consist in an identification, in some way, of God himself with Abraham and his seed; so that to incline to Abraham was to share in a Divine blessing, while to be at enmity with him was to be at enmity with God also, and entail, not a human, but a Divine, curse.

If, in the counsel of God, the means of a national outgrowth from Abraham himself was to be employed first, yet all favoritism of one race or nation is wholly excluded in every statement of the Covenant by the ever-renewing clause at the close, to which all else leads up; and which shows that it is mankind which was graciously borne in mind, and not a single household, people, or stock. But it is not promised that this blessing should come like the bounty of the physical world, as the rain falls alike on the just and on the unjust. Instead of that, men may receive it or reject it; may incline towards it, or bitterly

hate it, and thus be blessed or cursed ; a truth which all the history of the workings of the Covenant has impressively illustrated.

So far, indeed, is the Covenant from being, in spirit, an exclusive or family oracle that the mere mention of its most important terms excited Jewish zealots to madness. The countrymen of Christ and of the Apostles could ill brook the thought that the other races of the world were to become partakers in the promise made to their fathers. Within the primitive Church itself, while it had its centre in Jerusalem, the greatest difficulty was experienced in obtaining a full and free acquiescence in the admission of the Gentiles to their promised share in the inheritance of Abraham ; while in the nation at large, whether in Judea or in the Dispersion, we find repeated illustrations of that fierce feeling which was shown in the scene described in Acts xxii. 21-24 : “ And he said unto me, Depart : for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles. And they gave him audience unto this word, and then lifted up their voices, and said, Away with such a fellow from the earth : for it is not fit that he should live. And as they cried out, and cast off their clothes, and threw dust into the air, the chief captain commanded him to be brought into the castle.”

But there is nothing peculiar in this spirit which revolted at the thought of the most distinctive national privilege becoming universal, and common to every kind of men in the world. It is not only to Jews, but to all nations and races, that exclusiveness in these matters is most welcome ; and hence it is that the Covenant stands alone in the history of the world for the sentiment which it embodies. Its word is not that of political exaltation or national aspiration. To bless the foreigner implies no assertion of superiority over him other than that which

comes from bestowing upon him one's own share of good. It can only come with peace and good-will, instead of by war or fear; and the universality of its scope, exceeding the freest and most generous conception elsewhere recorded, shows a different origin from spontaneous human suggestion.

How little likely such a sentiment was to arise among the most enlightened nations of antiquity appears from the incredulity with which any attempt to fulfil its spirit is met now by many in our own times. There is nothing which sceptics have so often decried as foreign missions, not only from the supposed visionary character of such enterprises, but still more from a natural indifference to distant and benighted races. The prevailing principle of modern unbelief is Sadduceeism, which breeds an inability to value any great futurity by holding on to the present, and striving to be practical in its enjoyment, because everything ends to-morrow. Looking nowhere beyond their own short day, therefore, why should such men care a mess of pottage whether the time come when the African, the Papuan, or the Patagonian shall enter into the inheritance of the sons of God? A thought which occurs to the modern man only to be ridiculed would scarcely have come as an ideal in the dark age of the Covenant, when there were not two tribes of the world at peace with each other.

We now come to the important question how this great message was to be fulfilled, as the fulfilment, in turn, will explain the purport and meaning of the prophecy. With the exception of Christ's breadth of view when he sent forth his twelve Galilean fishermen to conquer the world, there is no instance in the Bible like the promise to the Patriarchs for the contrast between the smallness of the present and the greatness of the future. We have at first

nothing but a childless old man, and then, on to the end, a single family in its pastoral tents, from which to look afar over an expanse which takes in all the families and nations of the earth.

It is evident, from the terms of the Covenant and from the nature of the case, that these fathers are represented as standing at the beginning of a great Divine work in history, which was to go on continuously from them, as a growth is always vitally connected with its beginning, no matter how small that may have been. Hence their relation to the future of the world was to be altogether a peculiar and special one, and not due to their personal qualities as such, in the sense that righteous men in general may be termed blessings to the world. Of no other sacred characters in the Old Testament, however distinguished, was any such relation to the foreign peoples conceived, either by way of righteous example or in any other fashion. It is the prophesied Messiah, in the extension and nature of his kingdom, who presents the sole parallel in the Old Testament to the prophesied future of Abraham.

The final limitation of the Covenant to Jacob and his descendants, thus excluding the Ishmaelitic Arabs and the Edomites, raises the question whether its language could mean simply that the people of Israel itself was to become so numerous and flourishing as to extend its sway over the whole family of man, and that this dominion should be the blessing prophesied. This conception, so flattering to national egotism, was evidently cherished by the Jews of the time of Christ; their imagination having been kindled, as never before in their history, by the imposing sway of Rome over so many of the nations of the world.

But against such an intent of the Promise the arguments are overwhelming. In the first place, it is not true

that any political domination of one race over another is ever regarded as a blessing by the people or peoples who are under the foreigner, no matter how beneficent his rule be. The millions among the diverse peoples of British India, for example, although they present the rare spectacle of subjugated races who are much better off than if their country were left to self-rule, nevertheless so detest the stranger, spite of his really excellent and conscientious government, that no one acquainted with their true sentiment can doubt that the British would all be massacred, men, women, and children, by their well-governed subjects on the first safe opportunity.

If history teaches anything, it is that no family of man has yet been found which can love or be grateful to conquerors. But the language of the Covenant implies neither a figurative blessing nor a blessing so disguised by the hatefulness of the sword that those who are blessed cannot be made to see or to feel it. Instead of that, not only is the idea of compulsion foreign to the meaning of the term "blessing," but it is expressly foretold that men will bless Abraham themselves, and, on account of this attitude of mind towards him, become sharers of that good inheritance purposed for them through him. Therefore, whatever else the language of the Covenant may mean, it cannot mean the setting-up of another of those kingdoms of enmity in the world. A great war-kingdom to spring from the Patriarchs ill comports with the conception which all men form and reverence in their thoughts of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

If a universal political dominion on the part of Abraham's descendants does not harmonize with the spirit of the Covenant, there is something still more incongruous in the thought of all the nations of the world regarding the Jews themselves as a blessing for which to be thankful to the

Almighty. Whatever they may become in the future, since their separation from, and hostility to, the name of Jesus Christ, the world has felt as if the Jews were quite the reverse of a blessing to it; for there is no race which all the other families of man so unite in branding with odious or proverbial epithets; while the reciprocal Jewish sentiment is unhappily best illustrated by the bitter and intolerant spirit of the Talmud whenever it refers to the Gentiles or to the nations not of the seed of Israel.¹

When, however, we turn to the New Testament for its account of the connection between the Promise to the Fathers and the work of Christ for the whole world, there is not a single feature of the old oracle which there fails to find its adequate fulfilment, whether in letter or in spirit. Even among those who do not believe in any intentional reference to Jesus Christ in the patriarchal Promise, few will deny the exceedingly beautiful nature of the conception itself. In his comment on the faith of the Roman centurion, Christ expresses the true relation of these three men to the salvation of the world, when he said that at the great Reunion many shall come from the East and from the West, and sit down with the Fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, thus coming back once more into one family.² The language of the Old Covenant undoubtedly conveys a reference to the divisions of the

¹ "Purposely and rigidly, in exile no less than in the splendor of the theocratic polity, has the hand of the Jew been directed by the depositaries of his traditions against every man. . . . Offers of friendship and of brotherhood are as powerless as the fires of the Inquisition to break down that moral wall, substantial as the very fortress wall of the Temple, that resisted the voice of Christ, and that has been strengthened by the constant efforts of the Doctors of the Talmud for five centuries after the fall of Jerusalem. The power of resistance is the same at this moment that it was two thousand years ago." Art. on Talmud, *Edinburgh Review*, July, 1873.

² Matt. viii. 11.

human race mentioned in Genesis x. 32, and now the patriarchal tent appears as the sacred symbol of the reconciliation of the long-estranged and hostile families of man, brought together, not by one kingdom or rule or sway, but into the brotherhood of one household.

Viewed in this light, the original family in the tent of Abraham was the grain of mustard-seed, the beginning of the visible kingdom of God on earth, thereafter to develop by continuous organic growth; so that, even at the last day, when it shall comprise a multitude which no man can number, out of all nations and kindreds and tongues, yet they are to sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as their children. This imagery is derived from the immemorial tradition of the Eastern tent, where all strangers who once enter its sacred precincts and sit down and eat are truly adopted, for the time, into the family itself, and can claim full identification with it.

But to bring about such a kinship among men, the Gospel of Christ is absolutely the only operative influence in the world. Modern inventions and all the lights of our civilization have been imagined to be effective of themselves in fraternizing mankind; but it has been the red flag of the Commune which has arisen under their fullest operation. It is of the very intention of the Gospel to unify, in blessing, the whole human race, without one family missing; and already the effects of its teachings are deeply felt, even when not consciously acknowledged. Its voice has stopped the slave-trade and freed the slave—first when of the same color with his master, but finally, however different his color, because still he was a brother. Its warning has compelled the Christian rulers over millions of Asiatics to feel a heavy responsibility for the welfare of the conquered, which would have astonished the most enlightened Roman.

All nations, therefore, are even now sharers in a blessing which comes alone from the Christian conception of the oneness of mankind. Instead of the universal distrust and hostility of the Old World, the conviction is spreading that the good of one nation is a benefit to all other nations, and its evil lot an injury to all the rest. The whole world is slowly awakening to that marvellous thought that men are everywhere brothers, and responsible for each other's welfare instead of gaining advantage by the weakness or degradation of any branch or family of the race.

But it is due alone to the leaven of Christianity that this feeling either had its origin, or can continue to be an effective force to bless the nations of the earth. Political economists may strive to enlist the sentiment of selfishness to this end by demonstrating the commercial advantage of civilizing savages, because flourishing communities both produce and consume so much more than unprosperous ones; but when we see that selfish calculations rarely improve individuals, we can hope still less from them as general missionary agencies. It is the warm potency of the Gospel message alone which can bring the East and the West, and the North and the South, into a really conscious brotherhood.

But there is no fact more important to recognize, in this as well as in many other connections, than that Christianity, on its first appearance, was not a wholly new thing in the world. Humanly speaking, it could not have begun except for all that preceded it in a parent relation. All living things are necessarily connected with that out of which they are born; and so this religion, which is meant for all the nations of the world, really grew from the deep indestructible root of the ancient people of God.

A system of philosophy or of ethics may be new, because

of its beginning from some one thinker or teacher ; but not so with the Christian religion. It took the whole wonderful life of the nation which came from the Patriarchs to produce the men who believed in Jesus, and who heralded him as the promised Saviour of mankind. As far as we can judge, the constitution of Israel was as necessary a means for the light to appear in the world as is the lamp which holds the oil for the light which the latter gives.

Now that we can look back over the whole course of the history, we can see that it was truly through the Patriarchs and their seed that this world-blessing has come, and through no other channel. On this account, though in the patriarchal promise the person of the Messiah is not yet revealed, still the necessary conditions of the case show both how his universal kingdom alone can be its fulfilment, on the one hand, and, on the other, how the birth and development of that kingdom were dependent, in the first instance, on the national outgrowth from the Fathers of the Covenant.

CHAPTER II.

THE PROPHECY OF NOAH.

As we have remarked in the preceding section, the earlier chapters of Genesis appear to hold the same introductory relation to the memoirs of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as that held by the notices of descent and antecedents in ordinary biographies. Taking, therefore, the Call of Abraham as the point of departure, the first antecedent which would bear directly upon the subject would be the prophecy of Noah, recorded in Gen. ix. 25-29. This utterance meets us at the very beginning of history, as we know it, and represents Noah as a prophet, foretelling what would be the distinctive historical feature in the respective destinies of his three sons' descendants.

The passage itself, however, is a preface to the celebrated ethnological section which immediately follows in the tenth chapter, and which must be studied in connection with the prophecy, in order to understand the import of its allusions. Without this tenth chapter we should not know which races or nations were referred to as branches of Shem, which as coming from Ham, and which from Japheth. With it, however, whatever else may be uncertain in the exposition, we are not left in doubt as to what peoples were regarded by the author as of Shemitic, Hamitic, or Japhetic descent respectively, for the full lists there given leave little to be desired in the way of definition.

By all authorities, the tenth chapter of Genesis is ranked

as the most important ethnological document that has come down to us from early times, not only on account of its antiquity, but because, for thousands of years, it stood alone in its correct knowledge of distinctions of blood and origin, until modern science arose to confirm it. The ancient Greeks would have smiled at a classification which included their enemies the Persians, with the Celts, the Slavonians, and themselves, in one family, widely separated from the Phœnicians and the Egyptians, with whose higher civilization they rather endeavored to be identified. So entirely had all idea of the true origin of their own people died out among them, even in tradition, that the Athenians regarded themselves as *Autochthones*, or born of their own soil, while each of the other states had myths which reveal a similar ignorance of the quarter from which the first Greeks had migrated.¹

It has been only by means of the modern science of philology that the real beginnings of the nations could be made out, and as its results have become more clearly established the more confirmatory is its testimony to the statements of the tenth chapter of Genesis, so that the nomenclature of ethnology is now largely based upon its divisions.

The first step towards this elucidation of the origin of the historic races of the world was owing to the discovery of the Sanscrit or ancient language of the Brahminical conquerors of India. In studying its numerous remains in the religious literature of the modern Hindoos, scholars soon found that in its structure and fundamental words it was plainly allied very closely with the oldest Latin and other European languages, and not with any such

¹ "It was the universal belief of antiquity that in Italy, as well as elsewhere, the first population had sprung from the soil."—Mommsen, "Hist. Rome," Vol. I., p. 29.

Asiatic tongues as the Arabic on the one hand, or the Turkish on the other. This discovery gave impetus to the study of comparison between the fundamental words of different languages, such as those of father, mother, earth, sky, fire, etc., and of the laws by which the most original or root forms varied into dialects or allied languages, until a modern science has thus been constructed, one of the most definite and trustworthy in its results, that of Comparative Philology. By means, therefore, of their speech, we can now trace the progress of historical peoples much farther back than their written records, and as the culture and condition of an individual can be readily deduced from his words, so by their words we can make out a great deal of the life of the primeval ancestors of the past and present nations of the world.

Among the results of this study universally accepted by scholars are the following: That the present peoples of Europe, *i. e.*, the English, Germans, Scandinavians, Russians, French, Italians, and Spaniards, with their American offshoots, and the ancient Romans and Greeks, are all branches of the same family with the ancient Persians, and these, in turn, were near relations of the ancient Brahmins, who conquered India about the 16th or 18th century B.C. All these widely dispersed and mighty races can be traced, without question, by their linguistic affinities to a common fatherland on the great plateau of Persia, and hence, from the name Iran, which that region has always held, and which it bore in Sanscrit tradition, they are termed in ethnology the Aryan races.

Wholly distinct in their linguistic characters, and far inferior in numbers and geographical range, is the family of nations which occupies the region of Western Asia intervening between the homes of the European and the Indian branches of the Aryan stock. Owing to the more

restricted geographical distribution of this family, its respective peoples, both ancient and modern, are even more closely bound together by their speech than are the Aryan races. They are termed the Shemitic family, their only modern representatives being the Arabs and the Jews, or Hebrews, with a few feeble remains of the Syrian and Coptic branches. In ancient times, the Assyrians of Nineveh, the later Babylonians of the age of Nebuchadnezzar, the later Phœnicians and Carthaginians, the Syrians of Damascus, with the Moabites, the Ammonites, and the Edomites belonged to this family, their different dialects being hardly more separated one from another than the modern Spanish from the Italian.

Modern explorations, however, have proved that long antedating the Shemitic dialect, which was the vernacular in Babylon in the time of Nebuchadnezzar, there was a language spoken in those countries which was clearly non-Shemitic in structure. The very old civilization of Babylon evidently came from the people who used this tongue, for in the time of Nebuchadnezzar it was the learned, though dead, language of the day, employed in literature, religion, laws, and sciences. The remains of the great Assyrian libraries of clay tablets, which are now being disinterred, prove that many centuries before Nebuchadnezzar the Shemitic Ninevites also derived their learning and religion from this primeval Babylonian race.¹ This original Babylonian language is believed by many to have been allied to the ancient Egyptian, the connecting link being

¹ "Most of the learning on these tablets was borrowed from the Chaldeans and the people of Babylon, and had originally been written in a different language and style of writing, hence it was necessary to have translations and explanations of many of these; and in order to make their meaning clear, grammars, dictionaries, and lexicons were prepared, embracing the principal features of the two languages involved, and enabling the Assyrians to study the older inscriptions."—Geo. Smith, "Hist. Assyria," p. 191.

supplied in the first home of the Phœnicians along the shores of the Persian Gulf and Southern Arabia.

Such being the verdict of independent modern research in this important field, its correspondences with the ethnological lists of Genesis are certainly very striking. With respect to Japheth, his descendants are referred to under the names there given, in subsequent passages in the Bible, so as to indicate clearly their distribution as extending from Persia, around the Caucasus, to the shores of the Black Sea and the Grecian archipelago; all of which corresponds to the historic birthplace of the nations of Europe.

The Gomerians are identified by ethnologists with the Kimmerians of Homer, who, according to Herodotus, broke over into Asia Minor and Greece in the time of the father of Crœsus. They left their name in the Crimea, and are thence uninterruptedly traced by historical allusions under the name of Cimbri, Cymric and Gaelic Celts, one relic of their name being found in Cambria, or Wales. Madai is the name of the Medo-Persic race; Yavan or Ion (Ionia) is the Bible name for Greece, while Meshec is identified with the Moschi of the classical writers and the modern Muscovites. Language also proves that the Gothic or German tribes were offshoots from the old Persian stock, who pressed upon the Cimmerians or Celts, and drove them westward about the ninth century B.C.

The next enumeration following that of the Japhetic nations in this tenth chapter, is the interesting account of the first Hamitic peoples, from which we learn that their original seats were as much in Asia as in Africa. The term Cush is nearly everywhere translated in our version by the Greek name Ethiopia, and although Homer, who makes the earliest Greek reference to the Ethiopians, besides calling them the wisest of men, also expressly divides them

into the Eastern and the Western Ethiopians, yet even so late a writer as Bunsen denies that there was an Asiatic Cush, in contradiction to this passage in Genesis, which distributes the oldest Hamitic family from Babylonia and its cities to the states of Southern Arabia. The excavations of the last quarter of a century, as we have just remarked, have decisively settled the Hamitic character of primeval Babylonia, its science and religion, and show that in the late days of the Shemitic power, the Hamitic language held the same relation to the court and literature of the age that the Latin for so long held in Europe.

These facts should not be allowed to pass without a recognition of their testimony to the superiority of the Bible in all references to true antiquity. Throughout the uncritical times of Hume, Gibbon, and Voltaire, Greek and Roman writers were credited with much more knowledge of history than the writers of the Bible. There was also but little discrimination then between one ancient author and another; for they were all regarded as equally inspired with the classic spirit, so that Livy was considered as good an historian as Thucydides, and Ctesias as Herodotus. But we now know that the acquaintance of the best classical authors with the true story of either Egypt, Babylonia, Elam, Media, or Persia, was not much better than that of Chinese writers in our day with the history of Europe. They represented Nineveh as much more ancient than Babylon, and so ignorant were they of even the main facts of Assyrian history, that scarce a single accurate statement, of any importance, about this once great empire can be found in either a Greek or Latin book. Nor does the knowledge of classical authors improve on investigation when we test them about any events which occurred only two centuries before Herodotus. The Hebrew writers, on the other hand, correctly knew, as just

remarked, where the Greeks themselves came from, a fact which had not survived even as a faint tradition in the times of their earliest author, Homer. Hence, it is now time to say that whenever a classical author, in any reference to historical fact common to him and the Bible, either contradicts or fails to confirm the Biblical statement, then it is *his* testimony which is to be regarded as worthless.

The term Mizraim, or the two Mizrs, *i. e.*, Upper and Lower, is, in Greek, Egypt, a name wholly unknown at present in the country itself, which is called by its inhabitants Musr after its original name in this list. The name Phut occurs repeatedly in the Old Testament in conjunction with Mizraim, and was rendered Libya by the Septuagint translators, who themselves lived in Egypt; thus connecting the other races of Africa with Ham. The use of both dual and plural forms to the names in these lists shows that the intention was to give the origin of races, not the mere enumeration of individual sons. Moreover, the mention of some of the names in Southern Arabia as descendants of Ham, and the occurrence again of the identical names as descendants of Shem—verse 7, Havilah, Sheba, and Dedan ascribed to Ham; in verse 29, Havilah to Shem; and in Gen. xxv. 3 Sheba and Dedan to Shem—points to an admixture of the Hamitic and Shemitic peoples in that quarter, a fact fully borne out by the notices of history.

The author of this account mentions the sons of Shem last, evidently for the purpose of indicating more clearly the descent of Abraham himself, the preface being—Shem, the father of all the children of Eber. From this statement it would seem as if the Assyrians and the Elamites were the first of this branch who formed settled nations. Asshur is represented as an emigrant from Hamitic Babylonia, and as founding the great cities which were long

the royal residences of the Assyrian monarchs, even before Nineveh. After many centuries of struggle, the Shemitic Assyrians gradually conquered Babylon, so that latterly the kings of Nineveh, especially Esarhaddon, son of Sennacherib, held their courts at the former city. Subsequently it was left under a Shemitic viceroy, who afterwards rebelled, and, joining with the Medes, overthrew Nineveh, and thus founded the dynasty of which his son, Nebuchadnezzar, was the greatest king.

In the name of Joktan, the son of Eber, we have the traditional ancestor of the larger portion of the great Arab race. Ishmael and his descendants, who lived about Mecca, are therefore termed by Arabian writers the naturalized Arabs, in distinction from the Joktanides, or original Arabs; for although the Ishmaelitish tribes rose to the highest honor as ancestors of Mohammed, yet they remained in the genealogical lists of Arab tribes as a Syrian branch engrafted on the Arab stock.¹

Having thus sketched the main features of this remarkable ancient classification of nations, so as to demonstrate the particular reference to the different portions of the prophecy of Noah in the mind of the author, we are the better prepared to examine the passage itself, which reads, "And Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done unto him. And he said, Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren. And he said, Blessed be Jehovah, God of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant. God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant."²

These few words are comprehensive in every sense, and refer to great distinguishing marks in general, rather than in special history; pertaining to each family as a whole,

¹ Introduction to the Koran, p. 6. Geo. Sale.

² Gen. ix. 24-27.

and not to exceptional members of it. The standpoint is removed too remotely to bring into view any one nationality as such, for none yet existed ; only three divisions of mankind, and nothing less. In the exposition of the passage, however, a great deal of discussion has arisen concerning the language about Canaan, partly from a singular fear that if it be referred to the race of Ham in general it might be used in justification of African slavery. But the fact of prophecy does not in any way affect the moral character of the human acts which fulfil it. The Babylonians and the Romans were equally iniquitous for their wars upon Jerusalem, and were equally judged therefore, though the former fulfilled the prophecy of Jeremiah, and the latter that of our Saviour, upon the guilty city.

The only real difficulties arise out of the selection for mention of only one of Ham's children, and the silence about the transgressor himself. It is an unjustifiable exercise of pure imagination to suggest, as some have done, that Canaan partook personally in the offence of his father, for if such an addition to the narrative be allowable, any others that may be thought of would be equally so. A difficulty also attends the explanation which accounts for the mention of Canaan on the principle that the sins of the fathers are visited on the children ; for in this case it is only one child who thus suffers, while it is plain that the law is general in its nature, and nowhere else in the Bible do we find one child cursed with the parent's sin, while the other children go free.

But a still more serious objection to limiting the language to Canaan is its evident incongruity with the scope of the other predictions. Those respecting Shem and Japheth cover the whole field of history, and the terms used are singularly apt, as we shall see, in denoting, not the fortunes of any one offshoot of either stock, but the

place in history of each as a family of man. But this one clause, if restricted to the tribes of Canaan, alludes to a very small Hamitic people, who were long extinct before any Japhetic conqueror could have fulfilled the prophecy by enslaving them.

None of these difficulties, however, occur in the exposition which is based on the recognition of the representative character of a son, in Old Testament idiom, as well as in Shemitic thought and custom in general. Thus, among the Arabs, the father and mother change their names, as soon as a son is born to them, to that of the parents of the name which the son bears. The feeling which prompts this custom even goes so far as to name a man after the son which he ought to have had, if, after a certain age, he has failed to escape the prospect of the extinction of his line—in the estimation of that people a great calamity. Thus, a childless Abraham, after fifty or sixty, would be called Abu Ismail by Moslems, or Abu Isaac by Christians. In the same way blessings, and invariably cursings, are invoked among them not on the individual directly, but on his race.

Throughout the Old Testament, indeed, one of the most distinctive aspects of the world of thought in which all Hebrews moved was the inseparable connection between the acts of the father and the fate of the children in all prophetic events, and none the less pronounced in the inheritance of the evil results of some one sin of an ancestor.¹ That Canaan, therefore, stands as a representative of the slavish family, thus rendering it needless to specify anything more about Ham, though the Canaanites themselves, it should be noted, were never distinctly enslaved, is strictly in accord with Scripture usage, with the scope of the context itself, and, finally, with the fulfilment of the prophecy.

¹ Gen. xlix. 4 ; 2 Sam. xii. 10, etc.

The most remarkable part of the prophecy, however, is the reference to Shem. While no idea but enslavement is associated with Ham, and enlargement distinguishes Japheth, religion is the portion of Shem. God should be known in the world only as a Shemitic deity. This is the first passage in which God is spoken of as the God of a person, and therefore identified with that person in a peculiar way. What that way should be, in the case of Shem, is not specified, because that would not accord with the time and manner of the prophecy, and yet there is a wonderful significance in these very few words. The "Blessed be" intimates a cause of thanksgiving that Jehovah should thus identify himself with Shem. We know by this that it is something for which men will bless God, while it is plain that the other families of men must in some sense become Shemitic if Jehovah is to be their God also.

It is impossible not to be struck with the correspondence of these words to the greatest historical facts. The word "enlargement" has certainly become the fittest to apply to Japheth; his dominion, moreover, being as complete in the intellectual as in the geographical world, for the supremacy first gained by the Greek mind has never since been lost. But in religion, Japheth has humbly bowed to his brother Shem, although so much his superior in extent and power. However little inclined any one may be to regard these words as prophetic, he must nevertheless admit that the distinctive and surprising part which the Shemitic family has played in history, so out of proportion to its numbers, is solely due to its spread of the worship of its God, whether through the origin of Christianity from the Hebrew branch, or through the propagandism of the Arabs.

By means of the first, and with the most peaceable of all agencies, evidencing the simple power of the bestow-

ment upon Shem, the finest branches of the Japhetic stock have abandoned their native religions and applied themselves devotedly to sharing in the inheritance of Shem and of Abraham. But no less distinctively in accord with the general scope of this prophecy has been the historical rôle of the other division of the Shemitic race, the Arabs. While other races have issued from their native regions only to extend their political sway, the Arabs were impelled to their wonderful career of conquests solely by a religious impulse; to force the worship of the God of Shem upon the world by the sword. Owing to its religious character, therefore, there has never been a more enduring conquest, except in the case of Christianity. From China and Sumatra to the heart of Africa, great families of men have been most singularly unified in thought, manners, laws, architecture, and even dress, all according to the authority of an Arabic book.

Hence, wherever Islamism has spread, its roots are deep, so that modern civilization will find all obstacles of a geographical, climatic, or ethnological kind insignificant compared to the abiding hatred inspired by the Koran to every foreign influence. There can be no greater mistake than the idea that railways and other modern agencies can ever transform the Moslem of Algiers, Constantinople, Samarcand, or Calcutta, into a man of progress, so called, for the tough Ishmaelitish thistle cannot be made to bear figs, or even to grow with fewer prickles.

We allude to this subject in this connection because this resisting vitality of Islamism is itself an illustration of the other aspect of the prophesied distinction of Shem—namely, that none but a faith in a God of Shemitic origin will ever hold its own in the world. As a matter of historical experience, all other conceptions, except the Shemitic, of One Supreme God have failed to endure, either being lost, as

among the ancients, in polytheism, or equally so among the moderns, in indefinite philosophic speculations. There is hence a curious contrast between Mohammedan Unitarianism and the non-Christian, therefore non-Shemitic, Unitarianism frequently attempted in Europe and America. The latter is a form of thought rather than of belief, and for this reason unable to propagate as a religion, because it is apt to lose largely, in a few generations, by defections to pantheism, indifferentism, and even atheism. A Japhetic Supreme Deity, whether in Hindostan or in the West, is too shadowy a being to be loved or feared to the death. Compare with this languid sentiment the fierce faith of Islam, which can summon its earnest missionaries and martyrs from any race, whether Chinese, Malays, Turks, Hindoos, or Negroes, and the difference between a belief in God of Shemitic origin and of any other is a plain commentary on this profound forecast of history.

We have already mentioned the family associations which cluster about the Eastern ideal of the tent, when speaking of the patriarchal blessing to all nations. In this prophecy that Japheth should dwell in the tents of Shem, we have, therefore, the distinct prediction of the strange historical fact that the widely extended Japhetic peoples would seek for adoption into Shem's family, to become coinheritors with him of his portion in God. Had the intention been, as imagined by some interpreters, to intimate that Japheth should become possessed of Shem's part of the world, or territory, the expression would have been, "he shall dwell in the borders of Shem." But as we have before explained, the stranger who comes to the tent, when admitted, is thereby adopted into the family, and the beautiful ideal of the patriarchal promise we thus find foreshadowed here, only extended in the words to Abraham, Shem's true heir, so as to include besides the Japhetic, the

Hamitic peoples as well ; all families of man coming at last to the home reunion.

History, it must be admitted, has not left a word of this comprehensive prophecy without a most comprehensive fulfilment. The fiercest and most distant tribes of the great North have reverently sought the way to the foreign Shemitic shrines, the Norman baron walking barefoot to Jerusalem, as the Mohammedan Turk does to Mecca. But it is important to bear in mind that the prophecies in Genesis scarcely begin with their principal fulfilment until after the Christian era. At the very latest date which can be ascribed to the composition of the Book of Genesis, the whole aspect of the world seemed to give express contradiction to the statements of this prophecy.

Up to that time, the only great and powerful nations were those which are distinctly enumerated here as sons of Ham. To Egypt, Babylon, and Phœnicia we owe civilization itself, for most of the arts of life, the knowledge of the metals, the principles of science, maritime adventure and discovery, and, finally, the inestimable gift of letters, are without doubt products of the stock called Hamitic in Genesis. All that Moses could have seen of the sons of Japheth may have been captives in the train of some Pharaoh returning from an incursion towards the Taurus, or the unfortunates on some Phœnician slave-ship. It was not until many centuries afterwards that the first great Japhetic conqueror appeared in Cyrus the Persian. Since his time, however, the long sway of Hamitic civilization and power has utterly perished, and we have no representatives of the stock mentioned in the tenth chapter of Genesis, except those Africans who, down to our own day, have been sold as slaves to Japheth in America, and to Shem in Jiddah and Cairo.

CHAPTER III.

THE PROTEVANGELIUM.

THE introductory nature of the first part of Genesis, in its relation to the history of the Patriarchs, becomes still more evident in the chapters which precede the Prophecy of Noah, which we have just considered. We find in them not only the most condensed portions of the book, but also, we may add, of the Bible itself. Nowhere else are so many subjects of transcendent interest brought into view, or so many questions suggested by allusions, which, however, are almost as brief as they are profound. Instead, therefore, of being a connected history from the Creation to the Flood, it is plain that the aim of the first part of Genesis is chiefly to teach certain great religious truths, rather than to give a chronicle of events. It is hence made up of distinct sections, each with a more or less definite subject, which are so differently treated, in some cases, as to give rise to the supposition of diverse authorship. But while it may be true that the author of Genesis made use of earlier writings in the composition of this portion of the book, it is none the less clear that he introduces the different sections more for doctrinal than for simple historical purposes.

The first section is the memorable account of the Creation, and is a passage complete in itself, terminating with the third verse of chapter ii. It is unfortunate that the modern division into chapters was not made here. The contrasts between this and the section immediately fol-

lowing are numerous and striking, both as regards style and subject-matter. Its purpose is to affirm the great doctrine of God as the sole creator of the universe and of man. The Divine name is therefore that of Deity alone, as most befits the one Maker of the heavens and of the earth, and the one Source of life; and is expressed, in accordance with Old Testament idiom, by the term *Elohim*, a plural form used, however, with a singular verb. Hence, also, man is spoken of in this passage, not in any individual or historical connection, but rather as man in his organic relation to God and to the world, thus clearly defining his proper place in nature.

But so soon as we enter upon the passage which begins with the fourth verse of chapter ii., we cannot fail to note a marked change both of theme and of manner, from the simple grandeur of the few words which tell of the origin of the universe, to the story of an individual man and his wife, who are represented as living, after their creation, in a garden. In the first narrative, God appears as the Omnipotent Creator and Sovereign, and man as his special image and representative on earth—as he was from the first and still remains (James iii. 9); in the second, both God and man bear new and personal names, Jehovah and Adam, plainly suggestive of a different and more personal relation. In the first there are no limits to the range of view; in the second all is localized within a paradise or enclosed park, with its gate on the East (Gen. iii. 24). A marked indication of the change, moreover, is afforded by the occurrence, at the beginning of the fourth verse, of the words “These are the generations,” as this is a formula employed by the author of Genesis to denote the commencement of any distinct narrative or subject.¹

¹ The ancient Jews, for this reason, divided Genesis into sections called *toledoth*, or generations. Thus, after the first, or introduction, the second

No Christian can escape feeling a peculiar and solemn interest awakened by the changed subject of the second section. It is soon evident that we are nearing the most momentous questions which can engage our thoughts, for the theme is the beginning of the estrangement and sorrow of our race. In its story, moreover, occurs that passage which so deeply impressed the mind of the primitive Christian Church as foreshadowing the triumph of the suffering Saviour of mankind, that it was termed the *Prot-evangelium*, or the First Glad Tidings, the beginning of the long line of Messianic prophecies, with God himself as the speaker. In no other connection, however, is it more important to adhere to the primary rule of sound exposition, which requires the careful examination of the whole context in which the passage occurs, and which in this case demands that the essential features of the narrative itself should be detailed. It is a prophecy which is part of a history, and hence must be interpreted according to the manner in which that history is understood.

As we have remarked, the language used to describe the home of our first parents implies an enclosed Oriental park, planted with both fruit and ornamental trees, and where water, shade, and a perfect climate were combined, God himself being represented as its royal owner, walking in it in the cool of the day (Gen. iii. 8). The whole narrative, however, is made to turn upon two trees in this

begins (Gen. ii. 4), "These are the generations of the heavens and the earth;" the third, chapter v., "The book of the generations of Adam," and extends to vi. 8. The fourth, "The generations of Noah," giving the history of Noah's family till his death, extends from vi. 9 to the end of chapter ix., and thus on through twelve sections, terminating with "the generations of Jacob" from chapter xxxvii. to the end of chapter l. A brief recapitulation of the subject of the preceding section is usually first given, so as to keep up the continuity. For a full discussion of the *toledoth* the reader may consult the Introduction to Genesis in the "Speaker's Commentary," p. 22 sq.

garden, to which singular and significant names were given. The first and chief tree, as might be inferred from its place in the midst of the garden (Gen. ii. 9), was named the Tree of Life; the second tree, which must have stood near the first (Gen. iii. 3), was named the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. It was forbidden to man, on pain of immediate death, to partake of the fruit of either of these trees (comp. Gen. ii. 17 with Gen. iii. 22, 23). His disobedience of this injunction in regard to the second tree caused his estrangement from his Maker, and brought upon him the curse; while the reason for his expulsion from Paradise is explicitly stated to be lest he should partake also of the fruit of the first. The temptation to the act of disobedience comes from a serpent, who is, throughout, both described and addressed as a literal earthly serpent, although he is represented as conversing freely with the woman, and as present when God appears upon the scene.

In endeavoring to determine some principle of exposition for this narrative, it should be noted, in the first place, that no writers, ancient or modern, interpret the whole of it literally. To do this would necessitate, among other difficulties, the admission that the words of the serpent proved true throughout, because Adam did not die on the literal day in which he partook of the forbidden fruit; and, moreover, God seems distinctly to confirm the words of the serpent that the partaking of the fruit of this tree did enable man to know good and evil as these are known to God himself (Gen. iii. 22, "to know good and evil," lit. "in the knowledge of").

The commonest departure from the literal sense is the interpretation that the speaking serpent was Satan, who took the form of the earthly animal and thus conversed with the woman. According to this view, she and her

husband were in no wise surprised at this, because of their inexperience with the facts of the new world into which they were created, just as young children would not be surprised at talking animals. In this view, also, the Tree of Knowledge was named in accordance with the ironical meaning of the serpent, that after eating it Adam and Eve would know by experience what evil was, and its difference from good. The penalty of death is then variously interpreted. In order to provide for the immediate effect of the sentence, some would explain the phrase, "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die," as fulfilled by the subjection to death of the human body, it becoming mortal from the moment of transgression, whereas, before, there was no death in the world. Others adopt the still more figurative interpretation that it was spiritual death which came with the eating of the forbidden fruit; and that this occurred immediately, involving bodily death as one of its results, though not till long afterwards.

The difficulty about this exposition is, that in going beyond the literal sense in some of the chief particulars of the narrative, while holding to the strict letter in others, an element of uncertainty is introduced which raises more difficulties than it explains. Throughout the whole story, the style of which is as simple as that of any of our Saviour's parables, there is nothing to indicate that behind the plain terms descriptive of its leading features there is veiled one spiritual fact, and one only—namely, that in the serpent we are to recognize the Great Spirit of Evil, while all the rest of the narrative remains simple matter of fact. If the literal account is to be departed from at all, it is not the language used in regard to the serpent which seems to demand it most urgently, for the difficulties connected with the literal understanding of the two trees are certainly much greater. Nor can it be said that we are

obliged by subsequent passages in the Bible to interpret the serpent as Satan to any greater extent than we are to spiritualize the other essential parts of the history.

We prefer, therefore, before proceeding further, to enumerate some of the conclusions which must be accepted from the narrative if it be faithfully interpreted in its literal sense.

1. That Eden was a circumscribed space, watered by a river, whose subsequent course was unlike that of any river of the present earth.

2. That at the centre of the garden was planted a tree, the fruit of which, when eaten, would confer immortality.

3. That the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge, on the other hand, did impart to man, on eating it, a *Divine* knowledge of Good and Evil; that is, not as evil is now known by man, only through experience, but as it is known, in its essence and origin, by God; for such is the express statement in the words ascribed to Jehovah in Gen. iii. 22. That Adam and Eve must have known already what evil was, in its ordinary sense, is necessarily implied by their understanding the threatened penalty of death; while the knowledge of evil which man, after partaking of the fruit of the tree, then shared with God could not have been by his sharing in a *Divine experience* of evil.

4. That the expulsion of man from Paradise was necessitated by the effects that would follow upon his eating of the Tree of Life. To prevent this, a guard of Cherubim¹ was stationed with a flaming sword at the gate of the Garden, to prevent man from entering where the Tree of Life was.

If a narrative with such particulars were found any-

¹ An order of heavenly beings diverse from angels, and always represented as the immediate attendants on the Divine Presence.

where else in the Bible than in Genesis, there would be no hesitation in recognizing it as plainly and intentionally figurative. In Revelation, for example, we have repeated references to the Paradise of God, with the Tree of Life in the midst of it, and it is described as standing by the River of the Water of Life; but no one thinks either of a literal tree or of a literal river in that connection. The simple rules by which we understand the purport of any language in the Bible as symbolical rather than as literal are, in the first place, when the literal sense leads to radical contradiction of the teaching of the Bible itself, or, in the second place, to obvious physical impossibilities. But both of these results follow upon any consistent literal interpretation of the account of the Fall, as a few considerations clearly establish.

First, it would be difficult to overstate the serious objections to a doctrine of eternal life giving properties in any form of matter, whether in the fruit of a tree, or other article of food or drink. It has all the worst features of fetichism, and so traverses the whole body of Biblical truth that it is not even worth discussion. There *must* be some other meaning to this passage (Gen. iii. 22, 23) than that there ever grew, in Asia, or anywhere else on this globe, a tree which needed to be encircled with the flaming sword of the cherubim to keep its fruit from being eaten by mortals. Moreover, what kind of immortality the fruit of a tree could confer is to the last degree obscure; for if this be interpreted as applying to the human soul, that was created immortal from the first, and hence will live forever at any rate. If it be interpreted, on the other hand, as conferring immortality on the body, we are then reduced to maintaining that God is limited by a blind fate dependent upon physical things, which obliges him to take extraordinary precautions against the medicinal proper-

ties of an earthly fruit (Gen. ii. 9) neutralizing his solemn penalty of death!

Such weak conceptions are to be found in legends of Jupiter, but applied to the true God they are blasphemous. The time has long passed when a truthful mind of ordinary intelligence can believe that the present human body, with its perfect correspondence to the great series of other animal bodies, could have been made immortal by anything of this kind. The difficulties which arise as soon as we try to conceive of the conditions of such a body in this world are of themselves enough to suggest a fatal flaw in the exposition. So palpably contradictory, indeed, is any literal interpretation of these words, both to the most sacred tenets of our faith and to sober common-sense, that it is usual for literalists, in their commentaries, to ignore this hard passage altogether. The reason for the loss of Paradise is commonly given as quite different from the explicit statement of the Bible to the effect that it was on account of the Tree of Life, while most learners are taught that it was owing to the sin of eating of the fruit of the other tree. It would be equally true to say that it was because Adam and Eve believed the serpent more than God, or because they were actuated by a sinful curiosity, or any other partial statement of the case; but that would not be the whole truth as taught in the narrative, and the exigencies of no system of exposition can ever justify the mutilation of history.

The language of the whole account, indeed, bears a close resemblance to those parts of the Bible which speak of the coming world at the restoration of all things, and in which the terms employed are evidently and designedly figurative. They are figurative, not at all because they deal with unreal or imaginative or poetic things, but simply because we are not now in a state in which it is possible

to impart to us a specific knowledge of the facts themselves. These accounts are therefore given to teach us the essential features of a most real world, but of which we can know only the outlines, and hence much the most correctly suggestive form in which to convey such information is that of symbolical narrative. This is proved by the significant fact that the exposition which takes the symbolical view of the story of Eden arrives inevitably at just the same doctrinal conclusions with those of the literal exposition, with the advantage, not only of avoiding the strange perplexities of the literal exegesis, but also of omitting or subordinating no part of the narrative itself, while it affords the profoundest insight into truths that lie at the foundation of our faith.

Moreover, it should be noted here that the subject of the narrative itself—namely, the origin of the fatal perversion of humanity, or, as it is tersely, though not scripturally, named, the Fall—is a subject wholly beyond explanation in our present condition. Why the greatest of all misfortunes, *a congenital tendency* to sin, by the side of which every other misfortune is insignificant—why this unspeakable evil should be the lot of each individual, without choice of his in the matter, or ability to prevent it, is a mystery unsolved by anything in or out of the Bible. This narrative is the only one which even alludes to the subject, and, interpreted as it can be only by the light of the other Scriptures, its statements imply the following conclusions:

1. That the eternity of the past has not been a blank, nor did history begin first with the human race. Instead of this, by the side of a sinless spirit-world there has existed from unrevealed ages a great kingdom of evil powers and intelligences in the heavens (Eph. vi. 12, “In *high* places” is in the original “heavenly places” or “heavens”), pre-

sided over by a master-spirit, in antagonism to God. Through his agency has come that evil bent of the human will which has been the cause of all the darkness of human experience and human story, and which has been as perplexing to the heathen moralist as to the Christian. Man was not made as we know him now, but began his existence in a state of perfect union with his God, with nothing denied to him except a communion with, and a prying into, the nature and origin of this kingdom of evil, veiled in the narrative under the symbol of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. The temptation to inquire into this great contradiction in the universe of the good God is allowed to overcome him by the art of Satan himself, and the effect is immediately apparent, not in physical death, but in the destruction of his spirit, so that man must be born again, if ever he is to live again as at the first (John iii. 3).

Some striking symbolical illustrations are then given of the mortal wound which human nature had thus sustained. First, a sense of nakedness, which made the thought of meeting God so unbearable that it led to the aprons of fig-leaves—about the worst leaves which could be chosen for the purpose of hiding anything. God is therefore significantly represented as providing a covering for that nakedness himself, by slaying animals (Gen. iii. 21). With this new sad sense is necessarily joined an instinctive estrangement from God. We have next an illustration of that central heart-ruin, the destruction of love and the substitution of selfishness, in the casting of blame, by the man, on the wife whom he had loved as his own flesh; and, lastly, the first rising of rebellion against God, perceptible in the words “The woman whom thou gavest me.”

The bearing of the Tree of Life upon the whole history becomes of the highest importance, if we assume that the

great spiritual fact which it symbolizes is to be explained by subsequent references to it in the Bible. If so, the Word of God closes with the same mysterious theme with which it opens, in the reappearance of the Tree of Life, planted by the river, no longer guarded by the dread sword, but to be approached by man for his highest blessing. In Rev. ii. 7 the glorified Saviour says, "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the Tree of Life which is in the midst of the Paradise of God," and in the last chapter of the Bible it is described as seen in heaven *after* the resurrection and the completion of all things, so that the ransomed nations shall be *healed* by it, with the plain reference to Eden in the words "And there shall be no more curse" (Rev. xxii. 3). To eat of its fruit, therefore, is represented in the closing verse of the Bible as one of the chiefest rewards of Heaven. "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the Tree of Life."

These intimations surely point to a gift which every thoughtful mind must require before the possession of immortality can even be wished for. A Paradise or Heaven which can be entered, but one also which can again be lost, is neither the reward we would seek, nor that promised in these inspiring words. To be forever healed from the tendency to sin; to be delivered, not only from a wounded, but from a fallible, nature, and to be safe for evermore, is the blessedness which the heart longs for in the thought of an eternal home. Hence the symbol of the tree which will make men live forever tells of some principle in the spiritual world which fixes eternally the state of being. If this be so, it was exceeding mercy which prevented fallen man from partaking of it before he was born again and restored through "The Lamb who was slain from the foundation of the world" (Rev. xiii. 8).

Had he eaten then of its fruit, he would have lived forever as the fallen angels live forever, fixed in a state of unchangeable separation from God. Kept, however, from doing so until his salvation and new birth could be effected, the mighty cherubim of Genesis appear thus as servants of God's loving design; or, as St. Gregory Nazianzen says, "That evil might not be immortal, and that the punishment might be an act of benevolence."

The inner significance everywhere underlying the narrative is well illustrated in the story of the effort at concealment which marked the change from unconscious innocence to conscious guilt. If there be one thing above others from which human nature shrinks, it is the thought of the rending of the veil which now so securely covers the secret purposes and intents of the heart. In our present state of existence we have our thoughts to ourselves within such an impenetrable barrier that we let others know only so much of our real sentiments or feelings as we choose. That we do not show our real selves, but only the best appearance which we can make, is evidenced by the simple test that no one would agree to the making of a record, by some superior being, of all the workings of his mind during an ordinary hour of his life, and then offer it for general inspection as a faithful index of his usual inner self. We, therefore, who cannot bear to be seen as we are by our fellow-sinners, must tremble at the thought of meeting Him who, we know, sees all that lies within, and hence men have always sought to interpose something between themselves and the Deity.

With the unquestionable fact, therefore, that the physical imagery of this account was chosen to be suggestive wholly of spiritual truths, we can the better perceive the full meaning of that utterance which the Church has so uniformly interpreted as the first intimation of Christ.

The serpent, who stays by the trembling and ruined pair as if they were now his, is much more than a literal serpent, just as the trees must be much more than literal trees. In keeping, however, with the necessary conditions of all symbolism, the terms used remain consistent with the uniformly figurative language of the whole history. "And the Lord God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field: upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life: and I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."¹

The chief significance of this prophecy lies in its connection with the woman instead of the man. Such a departure from the universal Scriptural as well as ordinary usage, which regards the man as the representative of the race, would not take place, we may be sure, except advisedly, and for the purpose of indicating some special element in the case. An ordained conflict is here foreshadowed, in which, at first sight, the advantage appears to rest wholly with him whose erect and divinely imaged form seems calculated for an easy triumph over a treacherous and prostrate foe. Moreover, the power of the serpent, though so deadly that greater numbers of the human race are destroyed by it than by all the beasts of the field, nevertheless resides wholly in the head, the rest of its body being more vulnerable than in the case of any other formidable creature; and it is this seat of power which is to be crushed.² With the wonderful suggestiveness of sym-

¹ Gen. iii. 14, 15.

² Sir Joseph Fayrer, M.D., states that, according to official reports, the deaths caused by bites of venomous serpents in the districts of India which

bolism, the figure implies that the human victor would himself experience the whole power of the enemy in the very act of overcoming him. It matters not where the venom enters, its entrance alone is all that is needed to show its malign potency.

From an individual conflict between the woman, or her representative, and the serpent, the language of the prophecy passes to a continued enmity between the offspring of each. Who are the seed of the serpent is plainly indicated by our Saviour himself, in that remarkable parable where, as he explains it, the field is the world of mankind, and the tares are those who, while born of the same flesh and blood as the seed which came from the Master's hand, are yet truly the children of the Wicked One alone.¹ In keeping also with this solemn truth are the words which he addressed to those whose murderous intent he clearly recognized, though often they approached him with fair words.² "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it."³

As this term, the seed of the serpent, is applied collectively to the world of apostate men, New-Testament usage warrants, on the other hand, the application of the term seed of the woman to the Church of God, especially when engaged in conflict with the powers of darkness. Thus Paul, in addressing the Roman Christians, who were soon to enter upon the great ordeal of the persecution by Nero, tells them, with plain reference to this

are under British rule amounted in the year 1869 to 11,416; and that "were such information available, and collected from the whole of Hindustan, it would be found that more than 20,000 persons die annually from snake bites alone."—"The Thanatophidia of India," p. 32, by J. Fayrer, M.D., C.S.I.

¹ Matt. xiii. 38.

² Matt. xxii. 16.

³ John viii. 44.

passage, that "the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly."¹

History, indeed, illustrates throughout this prophesied struggle between two types of human character, on the relative preponderance of which has depended the real aspect of each age. The qualities of the man of war who subjugates and enslaves, as well as those of the deep schemer or seducer, have been long admired above the feminine virtues of forbearance, trustfulness, purity, and goodness, and the contrast meets us in all completeness at that same juncture when the Apostle calls this primeval prophecy to mind. On the one side, then, appeared the embodiment of skilful and cruel force, whose innermost spirit is shown in its pleasures, the insolent Roman triumph, and the nightly slaughter in the Coliseum. On the other, we see the Church in the Catacombs, her children mostly slaves and poor artisans; but as the centuries roll on it becomes manifest that the real victory belongs to the seed of the woman, and this eventual triumph is now foreshadowed by such signs as the increasing discredit of war, slavery, and craft, and even in the appropriation of the Christian principle of self-sacrifice by atheists.

But this strife between a hostile world and the Church is shown by the prophecy to be dependent upon an essentially individual, and not merely general, conflict between the woman and the serpent. The question, therefore, naturally arises, who represents the woman in this coming contest? Not Eve herself, nor any of Eve's daughters; for the woman, as woman, has no more distinctive share than the man in the war with evil on earth, personified or unpersonified. In addition, however, to hereditary and instinctive hostility of race or following, the language implies in the clause "between thee and the

¹ Rom. xvi. 20.

woman" a true personal enmity with its inevitable result in conflict.

The importance attached by the primitive Church to these words can scarcely be wondered at, for they constitute a most remarkable statement by symbol of the great Christian doctrine respecting the meaning of the crucifixion and death of Jesus Christ. It is difficult for the most confirmed unbeliever to regard this event as a crucifixion only, because so transcendent have been its effects that it stands, beyond all comparison, the great solemn event of the world. About the Cross where stood the Virgin, the history of mankind has turned, as by some unseen power, swaying irresistibly the destinies alike of friends and foes.

And yet, in itself, it was nothing unusual. Owing, it would seem, to a peculiar national antipathy, the Romans inflicted the dreadful punishment of crucifixion more often on the Jews than on any other subjugated people. When Jesus was about twelve years old, the age of the most vivid and lasting memories, the proconsul Varus crucified two thousand of the youths of the land along its highways; and similar ghastly spectacles were so often renewed, up to the culminating horror of the siege of Jerusalem, that the Jewish nation was literally the people of the Crucified, quite apart from the deed on Calvary.¹ That a Roman governor, therefore, should order the crucifixion of a young Jew was nothing extraordinary, nor was there anything in it to lead a spectator to feel that an unexampled hour for mankind had come. What made *the* Crucifixion the most august scene of history?

Nothing visible. Those who accept only the visible in this world can neither understand nor account for *THE* CROSS. At the dread hour itself but one person recognized the victorious king in the Sufferer who was slowly

¹ Josephus, Ant. xvii. 10.

bruised to death by that fiendish invention of cruelty. How the poor thief alone, and in his own anguish, came to see and to know Him can be explained only by saying that a glimpse was then vouchsafed to him of the true nature of the scene. Then was the culmination of the great spiritual conflict, ordained from the foundation of the world,¹ when He, who alone of all that have lived could be called the woman's Son,² triumphed by the Cross over principalities and powers,³ and brought in the new birth of the world by his own death.

But as He could not do this, according to the prophecy, without experiencing at the same time the whole fatal power of the serpent and of his seed, so all the contrasts meet here in most suggestive fulfilment. On the one side, the dark spiritual kingdom which Christ had come to overthrow was fitly represented on earth by Tiberius. The very plea for the Crucifixion was that of the setting-up of another throne than Cæsar's; but our Saviour's answer to Pilate distinctly intimates that both the Roman governor and his master were merely the earthly delegates of the real though unseen power which raised the Cross,⁴ and with whom the conflict was.⁵ Nor could one doubt, were it possible for that scene to be faithfully reproduced with the expression of scoffing cruelty, malignity, and deceit visible in the faces of the triumphant murderers, that men can indeed become serpents.

Over against these was a following composed solely of weeping women and trembling peasants; the sorrow of woman being the only thing, next to the death itself, which, through the ages, Genius and Devotion have most loved to

¹ 1 Pet. i. 19, 20; Rev. xiii. 8.

² Even Islamism concedes a higher rank to Jesus than to Mohammed because he was born of a woman by the spirit of God, and not of man.

³ Col. ii. 15.

⁴ John xix. 11.

⁵ John xii. 31-33.

picture at the foot of the Cross. When the words "It is finished" were uttered, the victory was won, and history itself has to bear witness that the Crucifixion marks the decisive beginning of the overthrow of evil upon the earth. The contest must continue to the end, but the seed of the woman ever derive new strength to come off more than conquerors through the Cross of Christ, itself the revelation of the power and wisdom of God.¹

In keeping with the conditions of its occurrence, this first of the prophecies would be expressed in more general terms than any which follow it. We can hardly fail to note, therefore, as we proceed, that each added prediction, while presupposing and including those which go before, at the same time restricts and specializes the line of fulfilment. Thus, in the promise to the patriarchs, we have the future good linked definitely to three individuals in succession. In the prophecy of Noah, the sacred inheritance is much more generally connected with a branch of the human family rather than with a person. Here it is still specialization; but as only the first human pair are within the scope of the narrative, the attention is directed towards the woman, rather than the man, as the nearest related to the purport of the "dark saying of old."² But as in the case of the promise to the fathers, and, again, in the foreshadowing of the union of God to Shem, so here the perfect fulfilment can be sought and found in the Son of Mary alone.

¹ 1 Cor. i. 18.

² Ps. lxxviii. 2.

CHAPTER IV.

THE PROPHECY OF JACOB ABOUT JUDAH.¹

THAT chapter in the book of Genesis marks the close of the patriarchal dispensation, when the family which constituted the first seed of the perpetual kingdom was about to develop into a nation. Like other nations, it would contain its changeable and perishable elements; but, unlike all others, it would prove, in the future, to be itself indestructible on account of the purpose in the Covenant. The last of the patriarchs, therefore, is here represented gathering his twelve sons about his dying-bed, not to bestow his parting blessing—for some of the utterances are the reverse of that—but to speak to them as a prophet. These oracles, as is usual in such cases, are couched in figurative and poetical terms, but on that account are the more graphic and distinctive in their significance, and leave no ambiguity with reference to the particular characters to be distinguished, the one from the other, in the future foretold by them.

As has been remarked in the Introduction, no people can show a history which can be confirmed by the proper tests for so long a period as the Hebrews. It covers many centuries of such varying and natural detail in its particulars of national life that it is easy to make out an authentic and connected story from the time of the Judges down to the Babylonian Captivity at least. The literature as well as the chronicles of each period afford a multitude

¹ Gen. xlix. 8–10.

of data for the verification of the narrative, which, moreover, has been still further corroborated by modern monumental discoveries, so that the distinctive features of Israelitish story are now better known than the early history of either the Grecian or Roman races several centuries later.

In keeping with the common experience of ancient peoples, we find a tribal division among the Hebrews from the first, so that each individual knew as certainly as any Roman ever did to what particular tribe he belonged. In the case of the Hebrews, this division was so rigidly territorial as well, that the nation for many centuries resembled the small independent states of Greece; the bond of union throughout the time of the Judges being found, as in Greece, only in the resort of the people to certain places of worship, and in the observance of similar religious rites.

That considerable changes should occur, in the lapse of time, in the relative prominence of the different states of the confederation, it would be natural to expect. In effect, the struggle for supremacy became finally limited to the two tribes of Ephraim and Judah, on the ultimate issue of which the destiny of the nation is seen eventually to turn.

Experience has abundantly proved, however, that nothing would be so difficult to foretell of any member of such confederation or collection of communities, either at the beginning or during any one period of its historical development, as its relative prominence, or the reverse. The future continuance of any condition is as uncertain with respect to states as it is in regard to individuals. Among the states of Greece, for example, at the dawn of its history, Argos held the recognized supremacy. This then passed for a considerable period to Sparta, until it was disputed by Athens. Then Thebes, which had long

held an inferior position, occupied the place of Sparta for a short time, and finally the national independence fell with the destruction of Corinth by the Romans. In like manner, it would have been utterly beyond human power to foresee the radical changes which have occurred during the past three centuries in the relative standing of the different states of Europe, from the once-dreaded supremacy of Spain down to the recent rise of Prussia.

Or, to come nearer home, our own American nation began but a century ago with thirteen states, as the Hebrews began with thirteen tribes. At that time Virginia was much the largest of the states in territory, and had double the number of inhabitants of any of the others, so that, with its advantages of climate and central position, it had every prospect of remaining the first state in the Union. After the lapse of only one hundred years, however, Virginia is the thirteenth state in population, and occupies a still lower grade in wealth and material prosperity.

Preliminary, therefore, to the consideration of the passage which is particularly connected with our subject, it is instructive to glance at some of the prominent features in the predictions which relate to the different tribes, because of their marked correspondence with a subsequent history which no human foresight could have anticipated. That these predictions were not written after the close of the nation's existence as such is shown, among other considerations, by the Samaritan Pentateuch. Even if they were composed as late as the time of David, there was still to elapse a longer period of national life for the whole thirteen tribes than that covered by the history of ancient Greece during its flourishing period, or of Europe since the fifteenth century. But as we shall show, that chapter, like the other prophecies in Genesis, finds its most impressive fulfilment only

after the Christian era, and hence is quite independent of questions regarding its greater or lesser antiquity. The very latest utterance of the Old Testament had become ancient by the time that the New Testament was begun.

The words addressed to the first three of Jacob's sons were indeed heavy to hear, and indicate, at least, that Moses would scarcely have invented them to the lasting discredit of his own tribe of Levi. Throughout subsequent history, however, there was one tribe which uniformly failed to assert for itself any position, or to produce a single eminent name. From the tribe of Reuben not one of the widely chosen line of the Judges, nor any captain in David's army, nor one out of the long list of the prophets, arose in contradiction to this memorable utterance. The only public allusion to Reuben which we find after the settlement by Joshua occurs as a derisive chorus in the Song of Deborah, characterizing the incurable vacillation of the tribe. "For the divisions of Reuben there were great thoughts of heart. Why abodest thou among the sheep-folds, to hear the bleatings of the flocks? For the divisions of Reuben there were great searchings of heart."¹

Simeon, also, soon lapsed into obscurity; while Levi, though exalted afterwards by the great gift of the priesthood, yet paid heavily for it, in the estimation of the times, by the lack of worldly inheritance.

The special fulness of the words addressed to Joseph, who was represented by the two tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh, was justified by the exceptional position which his descendants held. The language seems to exhaust the figures most expressive of increase in numbers and power. So remarkably was this borne out during many centuries, that we read that the birthright of Reuben, the eldest

¹ Judges v. 15, 16.

son of Leah, was given, on account of his sin, unto the sons of Joseph, the eldest son of Rachel, "and the genealogy is not to be reckoned after the birthright;" though it is added, significantly, "For [though] Judah prevailed above his brethren, and of him came the chief ruler [margin, prince]; but the birthright was Joseph's."¹

The tribe of Manasseh, Joseph's eldest son, was divided in its location between the west of the Jordan and the district of Gilead which lay to the east of that river, in the volcanic fastnesses of the old kingdom of Og. This tribe contributed many illustrious names to Hebrew history; such as Gideon, during the time of the Judges, from the western branch, and Jair and Jephthah from Gilead. The men of this latter rugged border district were celebrated for their prowess, as we often read in the annals of the reign of David, and among the prophets it furnished the grand personality of Elijah the Tishbite. Nevertheless, in accordance with the prophecy, the tribe of Ephraim, the younger son, maintained the leadership of the nation in numbers and in power, from the time of Joshua, who belonged to it, down to the reign of David.²

It was the jealousy of Ephraim towards Judah which led finally to the great secession in the days of Rehoboam; the kingdom of the ten tribes, headed by Ephraim, continuing, in spite of its dynastic disorders, much the stronger branch of the divided nation, until it came to a sudden end in the time of Isaiah.

From that date only Judah remained standing as heir to the covenanted permanence; and although a few fugitives subsequently joined it and kept up the memory of their tribal descent down to New-Testament times,³ yet ever since the destruction of Samaria, B.C. 722, the peo-

¹ 1 Chron. v. 1.

² Gen. xlviii. 17-20.

³ Luke ii. 36.

ple of Israel have borne the name of Judah, or the Jews, alone.

The utterance about Benjamin is interesting in its indication of his restless and insatiable temperament. Although not a large tribe, as the wolf is less than the lion, yet "little Benjamin" made comparatively more mark in history than any of the others. At one time, by a foolhardy but characteristic opposition to the united will of the nation, the Benjamites were nearly exterminated by their brethren.¹ Subsequently to this, besides Ehud the judge, Benjamin gave the first king to the nation in the person of Saul, whose heroic son Jonathan was a typical Benjamite.² The frequent occurrence of men of this small tribe either as warriors, champions, or rebels, rendered it particularly famous for its hot blood and adventurous spirit, characteristics which in the New Testament found their highest exponent in the person of the Great Apostle, who was of the tribe of Benjamin, and who never rested or was satisfied in his labors.³

With these preliminary observations on the relation of these passages to history, we now pass to the remarkable prophecy about Judah which reads as follows:

"Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise; thy hand shall be in the neck of thine enemies; thy father's children shall bow down before thee. Judah is a lion's whelp: from the prey, my son, thou art gone up: he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up? The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the peoples be."⁴

The meaning of these predictions is certainly very clear,

¹ Judges xix., xx., xxi.

² 1 Sam. xiv. 1-14.

³ 2 Sam. ii. 15; Phil. iii. 5.

⁴ Gen. xlix. 8-10.

and wholly devoid of obscurity. The first two words, however, do not convey, in the English translation, the significance which they bear in the original. By a reference to Genesis xxix. 35, we learn that the meaning of the name of Judah, given to him by his mother, was Jehovah-praise, and there is here a reference to that meaning in the marked expression "Judah thou,"—"The Lord be praised, thou," intimating a cause of thanksgiving to God in connection with Judah.¹

The words in verses 8 and 9, besides distinctly foretelling the ultimate supremacy of Judah over his brethren, are otherwise descriptive of conquering and irresistible power, though not at first apparent to those who engage in conflict with it. Judah is to be the couching, unseen lion of history. The tenth verse, however, stands alone among all the other sayings of the chapter in the complete definiteness of its statement. But for this verse it might be said that there is nothing peculiar in these parting words of Jacob to his sons, and that the literature of antiquity, particularly in poetical legend, offers many similar oracles. But this verse excludes all generalities by foretelling unequivocally that, whatever may happen to the other tribes, Judah shall continue as a nation, with all the symbols of national life, until the coming of a person named Shiloh, to whom the Gentiles or the foreign peoples are to render obedience.

The signification of these words was never thought doubtful by the ancient Jews, who at least ought to be credited with knowing the meaning of their own language as well as the intent of its phrases. As Bishop Browne

¹ As Gesenius remarks, the original term in Hebrew is applied to Divine, and not human, praise. The analogous word for praise in Arabic, *hamed*, is likewise set apart for sacred use, and from it are derived the Moslem names Mohammed, Mahmoud, Ahmed, Hamoud, etc., i. e. praised by, or praising, God.

remarks, "All Jewish antiquity referred the prophecy to Messiah. Thus the Targum (version) of Onkelos has 'until the Messiah come, whose is the kingdom.' The Jerusalem Targum—'until the time that the king Messiah shall come, whose is the kingdom.' The Targum of Pseudo-Jonathan—'till the king the Messiah shall come, the youngest of his sons.' So the Babylonian Talmud—'What is Messiah's name? His name is Shiloh, for it is written "until Shiloh come."'" So likewise the Bereshith Rabba, Kimchi, Aben-Ezra, Rashi, and other eminent rabbins."¹

That the coming of a great person is here prophesied, whose advent should have some relation to the continuance of Judah's national existence, is so plain that no other interpretation ever occurred to the people to whom it was delivered. Those prophetic intimations which had preceded it, and which were more general in their scope, though in each we find a progressive specialization, are in this prophecy finally centred in a single personality. In the first, the woman is specified as the one of the primal pair most connected with the future triumph; in the second, we have Shem indicated, of the sons of Noah, as peculiarly related to God; and in the third Abraham is designated from among the descendants of Shem, as the means of blessing to all the nations and families of the earth; while of his children, Isaac, and of Isaac's children, Jacob, were successively chosen to carry on the unfolding of the Divine purpose.

Now, as the twelve sons of the last of the patriarchs stand around his dying-bed, Judah is chosen from among them to be a *sign*, pointing from age to age to Shiloh. If this were a true prophecy, Judah was to be its abiding test, and no small test either, for really prolonged survival

¹ Note on Shiloh, "Speaker's Commentary," *in loco*.

is as exceptional among nations as among persons, as even Ephraim, with his twice-propheesied prosperity, would show.

The figures used to denote a continued national existence on the part of Judah are remarkably well chosen where the idea was to be expressed in few words. Indeed, it is difficult to conceive of terms which could be more definite and at the same time concise. The sceptre is emblematic of an actual executive authority, whether king or magistrate, bearing sway over some definite territory or country, rather than over a scattered race, as the Jews have been ever since the last destruction of Jerusalem. The lawgiver, on the other hand, denotes that other indispensable adjunct to a real nation—namely, the possession of its own legal courts and institutions.

Over against this ancient prophecy stands this fact in history, that with the brief exception of the stay in Babylon, which did not exceed the lifetime of a single generation—for some who had seen the old temple of Solomon wept at the inferiority of that raised by Zerubbabel—the tribe of Judah maintained its specific existence from the beginning of Hebrew history down to the overthrow by Titus—a nation in the strict sense of the term, where that is used in distinction from a race or people. Israel in Egypt was no more a nation than were the lately enslaved Africans in America, nor are the dispersed Jews a nation now, only a people. The national existence of the Hebrews began on the night of the first passover, the date of their deliverance from Egyptian bondage. It then continued unbroken until the division between Ephraim and Judah, after which, in consequence of the destruction of Ephraim, Judah remained with his king and country as much a nation as Belgium is to-day.

The interruption of the Captivity could not count in

the long perspective, for the Persians, according to their usual custom, immediately after the conquest, set up the Jewish State in everything except the name of king. The Persian empire showed no such merciless levelling of national barriers and thorough unification as that which characterized the organization of Rome, but was made up rather of tributary provinces, often so loosely related as to make war upon one another, a condition parallel to that of the states of the Mogul empire in India. Under the long sway of the Persians, therefore, the nationality of Judah grew apace as it never had done before, and became so strong that shortly after the Macedonian conquest it asserted its independence against the most powerful heir of Alexander's throne.

It is difficult to evade the force of the impression which simple historic fact makes in witnessing to the unexampled vitality of this nation's life when the Roman appeared on the scene. At that time, the Assyrian, Babylonian, Persian, and Carthaginian had become extinct. Greece had risen and declined. Ptolemaic Egypt was not a true survival of old Egypt, nor was the Seleucian Antioch a Greek kingdom except in name. From the Strait of Dover to the Euphrates, the only nation left standing was Judah, proud of a continued existence double that of the Roman himself, with a great capital, presided over by the High-priest and Sanhedrim, or national senate.

The exceptional dealing of the Romans in continuing the Jewish State unchangeably, appointing Herod as king, and his subsequent long retention, together with his worthless family, as rulers in the land for nearly one hundred years, is also a striking witness to the impression of intense nationality which the Jews made upon the politic Romans, who early saw that there could be only two ways

of dealing with such a people,¹—either to give them a greater share of national independence than other conquered provinces, or to undertake their total destruction; and it was not until after a century of fruitless trial of the former line of policy that they attempted the latter.

In the choice of such a king as Herod, however, the Roman thought little enough of prophecy, and yet more than one passage in Genesis found its fulfilment at that turning-point of history. Herod professed to be a Jew in religion, or else he could not have held his throne at all; but in descent he was an Edomite, the hereditary and bitter enemy of Jacob's race. As an enterprising and daring cavalry officer he managed, during those troublous times, to sell his sword in turn to Pompey, Julius Cæsar, Cassius, Mark Antony, and Augustus, and so adroitly that he secured the whole power of Rome to enable him to crush the resistance of the Jews and rivet his dominion over them. Thus came good, at last, the one comforting assurance given to his ancestor Esau when Jacob had stolen his blessing: "And by thy sword shalt thou live, and shalt serve thy brother: and it shall come to pass when thou shalt have the dominion that thou shalt break his yoke from off thy neck."²

It was all that the heart of an Edomite could ask to reign as king of the Jews, and this Herod did with terrible cruelty, and yet with such ability that not even during the reign of David or Solomon did Jerusalem appear so royal a capital as at the time when the Magi came with the exciting question, "Where is he that is born King of the Jews?" More numerous and far richer now than ever, the thousands of Judah came up from every

¹ On one occasion the Emperor Tiberius severely reprimanded Pontius Pilate for a slight offence to Jewish feeling. Philo, "Legat. ad Caium," § 38.

² Gen. xxvii. 40.

known land to the house of the Lord, where, still standing in their most imposing form and completeness, were all the ancient and proud symbols confirmatory of the old prophecy—the temple, the council, the priesthood, and the throne.

But that generation had not all passed away before there took place the ever-memorable catastrophe which left nothing of all these but a race of dispersed and persecuted outcasts, who for century after century have resorted to the Wailing Place under the Temple, there to mourn over the departed sceptre and kingdom of Judah.

Shiloh had come.

The name itself is of course a significant one, and was intended to express a distinctive attribute of the Messiah; but its meaning depends upon the spelling of the word in the original. If the Hebrew letter which corresponds to the *i* in the English spelling of Shiloh be retained, as it is in the Textus Receptus, the meaning would be the Peacemaker. The ancient translations, however, such as the Samaritan Pentateuch and the Greek Septuagint, as well as the Chaldee versions and the Talmud, to which we have already referred, evidently read it as a Hebrew word without the *i*, which signifies “He whose it is” or “Whose right it is,” so that in either case it is evident that the title was meant to imply a kingly prerogative.

In keeping with this conception, the allusion in the prophecy to the sway of Shiloh over the nations of the world is very natural. The One to whom the sceptre of Judah rightly belonged, He who was born King of the Jews, was so proclaimed in Gentile as well as in Hebrew speech on the cross, which from that time has become the conquering symbol of history, drawing to its obedience the mightiest races of the earth.

That one fact, duly pondered, makes the application of this prophecy to Christ irresistible. Has not he, whose coming was the signal for the departure of the sceptre from Judah, also secured the obedience of the peoples? What sway can be mentioned which compares for one moment with his in extent and power?

Nevertheless, this kingdom has been resisted from age to age, and is resisted still. How this King of the Jews has any power is as hidden now from many as it was to the multitude when he hung on the cross. Though the centuries have witnessed one opposer after another utterly destroyed by the conquering Lion of the tribe of Juda,¹ and his dominion is ever extending to the complete obedience of the nations, yet the warning "Who shall rouse him up?" is still needed in a world where so many can see nothing to fear in the conflict with him.

Some modern commentators whose scholarship is dominated by the principle that prophecy is impossible, have endeavored to explain this passage in a fashion which would have astonished the ancient Jews. After Joshua had conquered the land, he set up the Tabernacle at a place which was thereafter named Shiloh, a term which, from its root-meaning of "rest," may have been chosen as befitting the permanent site of the sanctuary after its wanderings in the wilderness. Or the name may have been given in commemoration of this very passage. During the youth of the prophet Samuel, Shiloh was utterly destroyed by the Philistines, so that we never hear of its being resorted to again. These commentators, therefore, read this passage thus: "A sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor the lawgiver from between his feet, *until he come to Shiloh*, and unto him (Judah) shall be the obedience of the peoples," i. e. his fellow-tribes. According to

¹ Rev. v. 5.

this exposition the meaning is that Judah would have the precedence of the tribes in the march through the wilderness—as, in fact, he did—and would thus exercise both a royal and a legal sway over them, until they finally halted at Shiloh, after which his sceptre and lawgiver would pass away!

Linguistically, this interpretation falls to the ground if the ancient versions be right in dropping the *i* in the name, as above explained, for the correct name, in that case, is not that of the town; and as the spelling with the *i* does not occur in manuscripts older than the tenth century A.D., it must be confessed that the exegesis rests literally on a single very doubtful jot. Moreover, grammatically it goes in the face of the unanimous rendering of the Hebrews themselves, who make the name nominative instead of objective—that is, “Shiloh comes,” not “comes to Shiloh.” Lastly, if regard be paid to the natural sense of the passage as determined by its context, the mere statement of this singular interpretation seems enough to dispose of it. There is no hint in the history that Judah wielded a sceptre of command or set up a lawgiver over his brethren in the wilderness, but exactly the reverse. The lawgiver was Moses, of the tribe of Levi, with his brother Aaron as high-priest; and the commander after Moses was Joshua, of the tribe of Ephraim. With the exception that Judah led in the order of march when the tribes broke camp, there is a remarkable paucity of reference to this tribe through all that period, and the precedence in the march may naturally have grown out of this prophecy itself, which had been known for generations before the Exodus. Likewise, there is not a word to indicate that after Joshua halted the tribes at Shiloh, Judah gave up or lost either a sceptre or a lawgiver of his own; nor is there to be found, subsequently, the remotest refer-

ence to such an event. This being the case, we need not wonder that no one ever thought of such a reading of the old prophecy until the exigency arose which made it necessary to explain away its historical fulfilment by Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER V.

THE TYPES OF THE PENTATEUCH.

THE Christian doctrine of type-prophecy is based upon the principle that God so directs and controls human history that he can cause its events and conditions to foreshadow, in an especial manner, other and long-subsequent events. As this principle, however, would be freely admitted by all theists, the question turns on the evidence that he has ever done this, and thus has himself spoken in prophecy, for he alone can make prophetic a fact in history. Before we enter upon this investigation, it is worth while to glance at some of the reasons which have led to the belief in the existence of prophetic types.

There are many considerations which would lead a Christian mind to expect divine indications in the development of the human world. In the story of life on this globe, the hypothesis of a sustained purpose alone explains satisfactorily how the slow outcome of untold ages has steadily tended towards one transcendent result—rational and speaking man. But each step was so gradual and apparently independent of guidance that some maintain that there has been no guidance at all; that the intricate and ever-continued process has always been blind, and in blindness has made man.

The same sound reasoning, however, which rejects the possibility of prolonged *unconscious* adaptation, and therefore perceives the successive steps in the unfolding of life as designedly preparatory to man, finds it equally legitimate

to look for preparation still, not in biology alone, but also in history, and to recognize man himself as guided on, in the providence of God, towards some great and good end. Why, therefore, should not the events of history be ordered from the beginning to point to the final consummation beyond, and that without interference with the natural causes of those events?

On the other hand, the teachings of the New Testament regarding the person of Christ necessarily imply that his coming could have been no mere historical fact, but rather "the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: that in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ."¹ Christ is thus revealed as the centre and object of history from the foundation of the world. Hence, a believer in this doctrine would see no difficulty in recognizing the teaching of Christian truth, even in the purely physical facts of the earthly scene of such a history; for example, in the configuration of the mountains about the Dead Sea, and the deep valley of the Jordan, with the wilderness on the one side and the fair land of Canaan on the other.

It is, however, peculiarly fitting to expect that the sacred history through which the special revelation of God has come to the world should be found to prefigure the advent of the Messiah in many ways and forms. A preparatory dispensation, like that of the Old Testament, which should point to the coming of Christ only through prophets and written prophecies, while nothing in the ordering of the dispensation itself seemed to lead towards its great fulfilment, would certainly be out of harmony with the idea of a divine purpose. Rather, it seems justifiable to require that the Coming One should be reflected

¹ Eph. i. 9, 10.

from every part of the first revelation, as its living, though more or less hidden, principle.

That a multitude of correspondences by type to the Christian doctrine about Christ and his Church are to be found in the Old Testament is very generally admitted. Even such a determined rationalistic writer as De Wette remarks, in regard to the Old Testament, that "already, long before the appearing of Christ, was the world in which he was to appear made ready. The whole Old Testament is one great prophecy, one great type of him who was to come and is come. Who can deny that the holy seers had long beforehand seen in spirit the coming of Christ, and in prophetic presage more clearly or obscurely comprehended the doctrine? And this typological comparison of the Old Testament with the New was no mere idle play. It is, further, hardly pure accident that the evangelical story in the most important particulars runs parallel with the Mosaic."¹

But the question still remains, to what extent can such correspondences be shown as purposely foreshadowing Christ, rather than as mere analogies or coincidences? By many it is felt to be easy to discover frequent resemblances between events long separated in time, as is testified by the saying that history repeats itself, and yet there is no thought of typical significance attached to these.

The only satisfactory answer to this question must be found in the leading type-prophecies themselves. A simple statement of them as they bear upon Christian doctrine ought to leave the mind quite able to judge for itself whether or not they have any real claim to rank as prophecies. If such an investigation should result in imparting to them a typical meaning, this result would be an

¹ Quoted in the "Citations of the Old Testament in the New"—Tholuck—translated by Charles A. Aitken, Andover; "Bibl. Sac.," vol. ii. pp. 592, 593.

impressive one, for it would testify to a divine direction in the course of the world as hardly anything else could do.

1. *The Egyptian Bondage and the Passover.*

We can scarcely commence with a better example of a profound and long-sustained correspondence between the two dispensations of the Old and New Testaments than is afforded by the narrative which begins immediately after Genesis. The central idea of the first book of the Pentateuch is that the covenant with the Fathers engaged that the blessing to all the families of man was to come through them. Hence the first scene in Exodus shows the nation of God, as descended from them, joined to him by a special and indissoluble tie, whose fortunes are to illustrate, not the ordinary growth of a nation, but the relation which God holds to his own people on earth.

In the New Testament the Church of Christ holds the corresponding place, and in the relation of Christ to his Church are to be found the really distinctive doctrines of Christianity as a religion. If the Old be truly prophetic of the New, we must discover significant correspondences between the ancient Israel and those special and essential principles which are the life of the Church of Christ.

We meet at the outset with a typical significance in the fact that the ancient people first appear as natives of a country to which, nevertheless, they were foreigners. Without agency of their own, but in pursuance of the predestined counsel of God, first revealed at the solemn ratification of the covenant with Abraham, they are found here the helpless slaves of the most powerful monarch of the world.¹ Over his ancient kingdom there has always

¹ Gen. xv. 13, 14.

rested the deepest obscurity as to its origin and its remarkable attainments in wisdom and knowledge. The attention is specially attracted to the overwhelming power of the king, who was sole proprietor of the land and its inhabitants, as no other king in the world has been, exacting from the latter the most incredible tasks in the building of the immense structures which have been the marvel of the world ever since.

Everything in Egypt tended to deepen the mystery of its inner life. To the common mind the king was deathless, for Pharaoh always existed, his throne surrounded by a powerful and intellectual priestly caste, which ever aimed to shroud in secrecy the knowledge of which it was the custodian. A deep gloom overhung the land, suggestive of limitless and unfeeling power, impressively symbolized, as we now note, in their massive sombre architecture.

The one salient fact, however, of all others, was slavery. A darker kingdom of force as its one principle it would be difficult to parallel in history. At every turn enslavement was stamped on mind and body, and it is probable that there has never been a land in which the idea of personal liberty was so utterly unknown as in the old kingdom of the Pharaohs. The formation of the land itself renders it the natural abode of irresistible oppression, for there is nowhere a refuge to which the weak can flee. Consequently, even in our own times, the fellahs, or peasants of Egypt, are the most down-trodden by their rulers of all men on earth. Also, in its most flourishing days, an abject submission to tyranny, however cruel, was shown from the highest to the lowest, and thus to be the slaves of a nation of slaves constituted the terrible and never-to-be-forgotten "bondage of Egypt." The debasement caused by that slavery engendered a train of evils in the

Hebrews which it required a long and bitter discipline to eradicate before they became fitted for a free national life in their destined home.

The superior knowledge of the Egyptians, apart from other causes, made self-liberation by the Hebrews impossible, so that although fully aware of the murderous policy which was aiming at their total destruction, they yet could do nothing to save themselves. The compassion of God, therefore, appears as the sole origin of their deliverance. It was he alone who chose their leader and destined him from birth to become alike their saviour, prophet, intercessor, and lawgiver, and for their sakes to abandon the king's court, and become a wanderer in the same wilderness through which he afterwards led them.

The final act in this first series of types brings the correspondence closer still.¹ By resisting one manifestation after another of the power of God towards freeing his people, the Egyptians brought upon themselves a judgment more dreadful than any described or imagined in the literature of the world. The suddenness of the catastrophe, when the angel came as a thief in the night, with the same fatal stroke for the whole land, suggests a picture of unspeakable terror and despair. But that moment was the beginning of the life of the Hebrew nation. It was directed to date its freedom, ever afterwards, from the instant when the first Paschal Lamb was killed. Throughout the long centuries of Israel's existence it was enjoined that the national anniversary should be celebrated, not in public congregation or temple, but in each household, with doors closed, in commemoration of the individual escape from the awful calamity which befell all not protected by the lamb's blood. Every injunction in regard to the observance of this impressive rite seemed chosen with the

¹ Exod. xii.

express design of connecting the deliverance with the special sacrifice, even to the command that those partaking of the Passover should be clad as if about to take their immediate departure from the kingdom in which they had been born, to exchange its bondage for the liberty of the people of God.¹

It should be noted, moreover, that it was the institution of the Passover which, humanly speaking, made Israel perpetual, however scattered over the earth the race might be. This was because the lawgiver so ordered its celebration that it marvellously enlisted every cementing influence in life, whether of patriotism, family affection, or religion. There have been few nations which could assign a fixed date for their national era, as in the case of the American Independence-day; but the Passover was this and much more to the Hebrews, inasmuch as it gathered to itself likewise the endearing associations which Christmas brings to the Englishman or Thanksgiving-day to the American; the day for family reunion, when all its members endeavored to come together to acknowledge the still living link with the past in the old father priest who presided at the sacrifice. With the Passover, even a country was not essential to Israel as to other peoples; for wherever a Hebrew household was found, there the natal day would be celebrated and the national feeling perpetuated, as warmly as in the Promised Land itself. For the other religious feasts a solemn ritual and splendid shrine were needed; not so with the Passover Lamb, that one ever-abiding sacrifice "to be observed of all the children of Israel in their generations."²

We may remark, in passing, that the connection between the deliverance and continued existence of the nation with the Passover would in time impart a peculiar and indi-

¹ Exod. xii. 2.

² Exod. xii. 42.

vidual meaning to the term THE LAMB, to all who inherited the associations of an Israelitish home. The word Cross, for example, is now an utterly different word from gibbet or gallows to a Christian. But the connections and ideas which are inseparable from it in all modern European languages would have been wholly unintelligible to the ancients. In like manner, we find in the New Testament the deep traces of Hebrew education in such expressions as the Lamb of God, the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne, the wrath of the Lamb. These, and many similar uses of the term, testify that the time-honored memorial of the salvation of God's people by the blood of the spotless lamb had at length caused the symbol itself to become inseparably connected with the divine power which wrought that salvation, and capable of a personification as strange to us as many Christian poetical expressions in reference to the Cross would have been to the classic writers of Rome.

Now, had all this narrative of Israel in Egypt been written *after* the Christian era, it would unquestionably have been regarded as a remarkable allegory, intended to prefigure the great spiritual facts and teachings which make up the Christian system of faith. For the Christian religion is much more than a code of ethics, which teaches only the duties of men to each other in this life. It is nothing if not a religion, and, as such, occupied with the affairs of the world beyond the grave as well as of those of this world, which last are but preparatory to the endless future existence which it reveals. Instead of an earthly kingdom, transient, however glorious, the work of Christ pertains to the high and unspeakably important concerns of man when he shall enter eternity.

Shall the opportunities of an endless life be allowed to man with his present fallible and corruptible nature? If

so, then immortality should be dreaded as an incalculable curse, because of the possible increasing development of human evil. Must he not first, rather, be made forever incapable of wrong in order to inherit eternity? From the necessity of the case, eternal freedom can be granted only to those who will be eternally right; and it is to confer this gift of deliverance from the sinful nature with which men are born in this world into the glorious liberty of the perfected sons of God that Christ came as the Saviour of mankind.

It is certainly striking to note the many counterparts in this whole history of the Exodus to the profoundest lessons of the Christian revelation. The Christian teaching is that the people of God are born here into a dark kingdom of evil, from the power and wretchedness of which they could never have delivered themselves. A greater obscurity hangs over the origin and personality of that kingdom than over that of Egypt; but the crushing weight of evil in the world of men has been the cry of all ages. One of the most solemn witnesses to this burden is the religion at present possessing the largest number of adherents, which acknowledges the misery of human existence to be so great that the highest conceivable good which it can promise is—Extinction.

The Nirvana, or eternal sleep of Buddha, is a better ideal, indeed, than the brutish paradise of Mohammed; for from the Indian sage it was the echo of the sentiment of that earlier and saintly Arab who said, Then “I should have slept. There the wicked cease from troubling; and there the weary be at rest. There the prisoners rest together; they hear not the voice of the oppressor.”¹ It is vain to deny that this fundamental doctrine of Buddhism is right, if there be no other country than this Egypt, and

¹ Job iii. 13, 17, 18.

no other life for men than that under this bondage to Sin and Satan.

In transcendent contrast to this fainting in soul are the glad tidings of a redemption from eternal death by "the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot; who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world;"¹ "Christ our Passover sacrificed for us."² Instead of lying down to die as those who perish, the Christian sees in the sacrificial death of the Son of God the earnest of a coming "inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven."³ As the history of Israel in Egypt led up, step by step, to its culmination in the Passover, so the life of Christ in the Gospels leads us up with marked significance to the night of that Passover supper when he instituted for all time the sacred observance which was to take its place in the world. "For this is my blood of the *new testament*, which is shed for many for the remission of sins."⁴ The prophecy of the old Passover had now reached its fulfilment in the one true sacrifice, which brought deliverance to men from that spiritual dominion, which made a heavenly inheritance impossible. Hence, also, it was that his side was pierced on the Cross, "that the Scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken."⁵ How, then, can any follower of Christ fail to partake of the touching memorial of the blood of the New Testament, when he who partook not of the first had no escape from judgment, but was cut off from among God's people?

¹ 1 Pet. i. 19, 20.

² 1 Cor. v. 7.

³ 1 Pet. i. 4.

⁴ Matt. xxvi. 28.

⁵ John xix. 36; Exod. xii. 46.

2. The March through the Wilderness.

The forty years in the wilderness constituted for Israel a no less memorial epoch than that of the deliverance from Egypt. Throughout its whole subsequent history, this experience was a constant theme in the literature and poetry of the nation as the disciplinary, and yet joyous, time of its youth. In like manner has the march through the wilderness been suggestive to Christians of all ages of parallels in spiritual experiences, until there is scarcely an event in the life of the great body of Christ's people which has not been prefigured among the remarkable series of types which this ancient history presents.

Beginning with the fact that the Israelites were always destined for another country, they leave their land of bondage amid the most impressive manifestations of the power of God for salvation. The constant interposition of God in their behalf becomes the unceasing burden of the narrative, which inculcates, from first to last, the one truth that Israel could do nothing of itself, either for its deliverance or subsequent preservation. It was their God who brought the people through the Red Sea; it was only by prayer to him that they prevailed over the prowling enemies who met them soon after their entrance into the desert;¹ it was he alone who was their guide, and without whose daily direction they never could set forward, and it was from him that their daily food descended. The whole story, indeed, is one sustained and continuous divine epic, in which the presence of the living personal God is constantly portrayed in directing the concerns of men.

It is stated at the outset that God chose the way through

¹ Exod. xvii. 8-16.

the wilderness for the purpose of educating and preparing his people for their final promised home. Here they were to outgrow the ways of Egypt, and from a race of slaves, to become transformed in the end into the soldiers of Joshua. The land into which they were thus brought possesses, therefore, a peculiar interest in those respects which made it conducive to their development.

It is a mistake to picture it as a wholly barren waste, for it has always been peopled by wandering pastoral tribes, and the winter rains clothe its diversified surface with both grass and flowers to an extent which, at certain seasons, renders the landscape very attractive. Grand mountains alternate with rolling uplands furrowed by deep water-courses, which, though dry in summer, resound with winter torrents; and ever and anon the traveller meets with palm-trees which mark the sites of ancient wells. Above all, there is a peculiar exhilaration in its fresh, cool morning air, which renders this region one of the healthiest on the globe, while the number of its fragrant shrubs and trees make the scented breezes of the desert the constant song of Arabic poets.

While, therefore, the wilderness afforded Israel no abiding-place or stay, it was not until the incurable perversity of spirit in the people caused a change in the whole route that the way became weary, and the landscape more and more barren.

Meantime, the overhanging cloud testified to the sonship of Israel with Him who never left them by day or by night, their ever-present Guide the journey through. Lastly, it would be difficult to imagine a more beautiful illustration of his care of his people, and their dependence upon him, than is supplied in the account of the manna, their bread falling from heaven as silently and unperceived as the dew; only in quantity sufficient for daily

use, as if each one in the camp were constantly remembered by the gracious and watchful Provider.

On the part of the people, the contrast is strong and instructive. The evil results of the life in Egypt began to show themselves simultaneously with the deliverance itself, for we are told that a great mixed multitude went up also with the children of Israel out of the land.¹ This was doubtless a mob of the lower classes, escaped convicts and vagabonds, who took advantage of the general confusion on that terrible night, when all the restraints of law were broken; and before long we find this undesirable element making itself felt in suggesting and reinforcing the murmurs of the more faithless section of the people. Especially was the heavenly bread distasteful to the appetites of this thoroughly Egyptian crowd.² Throughout all the earlier years of the journey, in contrast to the long-suffering patience of God, we have, for his people, a foolish, fickle, and unbelieving generation, whose faith was constantly failing under every trial of it, thus necessitating a discipline which might have been wholly avoided had they but trusted in him who had given them so many proofs of his love and care.

When, however, the wandering is over, and they stand at last on the plain of Moab, at the brink of the deep valley of the Jordan, it then appears what a great work has been wrought in them. They are no longer the serfs who left Egypt. On their way they have been taught the whole law of God, and moulded by the hand of their great Lawgiver into a unique and unchangeable people forever. Humanly speaking, if permanence of results is the true measure of a man's greatness, there has been no founder of nations like Moses, for his nation has continued to this day, bearing the indelible impress of his insti-

¹ Exod. xii. 38.

² Numb. xi. 4; xxi. 5.

tutions. That forty years in the wilderness made an abiding Israel, which no subsequent experience nor influences could ever so modify as to destroy.

The grand figure of Moses is, therefore, inseparably connected with the Law and with the scenes of its promulgation. There, at his majestic shrine of Sinai, where they were to meet the God of their fathers,¹ the stupendous mountain scenery, with the thick darkness, the lightnings and the thunderings, was peculiarly fitted to impress a people born in the low and cloudless land of Egypt with the important lesson concerning God which they needed first of all to learn—namely, reverence. Never afterwards, though often apostatizing from his service, could they confound their Jehovah with the idols or gods of the heathen.

The whole modern world has learned the same lesson through them, so that some writers complain that the Shemitic conception of Deity so weights the European mind that he cannot be mentioned except with bated breath. Compare this feeling with the levity with which both Greeks and Romans treated their divinities, and it is evident that those peoples never had stood before Sinai.²

After this lesson had been learned and the law received, it has always been regarded as of marked significance that the leadership of Moses ceased while yet the Promised Land was not entered. It seems as if, in accordance with

¹ Exod. iii. 18.

² The ancients had no hesitation in bringing their highest deities into all sorts of ludicrous associations. The simile about the Alpine snows in Horace (*Sat.*, v.), and the dialogue between Jupiter and Apollo in the *Peregrine satire* of Lucan, with many other examples which might be cited, show how readily their gods could be made to give point to a joke. This being impossible to Christians on account of Sinai, the fashion of making the devil answer the same purpose became so prevalent in the Middle Ages, and has so continued since, that the true Biblical representation of Satan is well-nigh unknown to most moderns.

an ulterior divine purpose, the lawgiver could conduct the people no farther than to the borders of their inheritance. To Joshua, instead, the work of bringing them into their possession was committed.

The last scene of the wandering shows them descending from the high table-land of Moab, under their new captain, into the valley of that river, the waters of which run at the bottom of the lowest depression on the face of the earth. The Jordan, at their place of crossing, is nearly thirteen hundred feet below ocean level. A short distance beyond, it flows into that mysterious lake which, shut in on all sides by immense precipices and desolate mountains, constitutes the only lifeless spot on the globe. As they came down the long steep descent, no eye could catch a glimpse of the river. It is so hidden between narrow rocky banks lined with thickets that the traveller sees it first only when he stands by its rushing waters. It appears then as if but a few steps need be taken to cross to the opposite shore, but really, except at a few places, it is always a dangerous stream to ford. Its current is so swift that at the annual pilgrimages probably more persons are drowned in the Jordan than in any other river. In the midst of that river, when it was at its highest, Joshua stood by the Ark and the Tables of the Law, until the last of the people had passed safely over.

The Christian bearing of this whole story is best understood in considering the relation between the Old Dispensation and the New. Every Christian is taught to regard the children of Israel not as a mere ancient nation, but as the then Church of God in the world. The Christian Church is, therefore, the inheritor of all this history, which, unlike the national legends of other early races, belongs to a totally different sphere of thought, and differs from all such in style and subject-matter. The march

through the wilderness was so ordered as to present a great scenic illustration of the mutual relation of God and his people, throughout all ages, in their life-course on earth.

The instruction, therefore, which this narrative conveys to the Christian is found, first and pre-eminently, in the radical distinction between religion and ethics, for it is his religion which teaches that there is for him another world than this, a future and a permanent condition, to the inheritance of which he has been destined from the beginning. His whole life in this world is but a preparation for the next. Here he has no abiding-place nor continuing city. This conception of human life as a pilgrimage runs through all Christian thought from age to age, and constantly expresses itself both in literature and song in the beautiful imagery supplied by the March through the Wilderness. It would be difficult to conceive the change that would be caused in the language of Christian sentiment, should this history be resolved into thin legend, instead of prefiguring the great facts in the life of the believer here, and suggesting the rest which remaineth for the people of God after the narrow river of death has been crossed.

After partaking of the blood of the New Testament as a token of his deliverance from the bondage of the kingdom of evil, the Christian is assured of his Redeemer's constant watch and guidance. He knows that during his course towards the better land he needs a daily supply of spiritual food from heaven; that his own steps he can never order for himself, nor overcome by his own strength the enemies and the obstacles in the way. Life assumes to him the aspect of a temporary state of trial and discipline, marked with grateful resting-places, or with toilsome and weary marches, in proportion to his faith and

obedience. Finally, when all is over, and he descends to that stream where, in the significant words of the first Joshua, he knows that he has "not passed this way heretofore," he trusts that his Great Helper, who ever remains to stay those waters from sweeping the least of his people into the lake of death below, will be there also for him.¹ The selection of the personal name of Christ, Joshua, or the God Helper, has always been interpreted by the Church as suggested by the peculiarly typical significance of Joshua's position at the passage of the Jordan, and by the fact that it was under his leadership, rather than under that of the lawgiver, that Israel entered Canaan.

Similar correspondences between the two dispensations are no less marked in their more general features. In the ancient narrative the people appear as a stiff-necked and perverse race, ever prone to unbelief, and trying the patience of their great leader. Instead, also, of being a pure nation, worthy its descent from the patriarchs, it had in its midst a multitude derived from the lowest and worst class of old Egypt. Instead of a consistent character or behavior, the whole conduct of the people was marked by sudden revulsions from joy and faith and willing service, particularly in offerings, to sullen discontent and murmurings or positive rebellions. There were passages in its course when the camp bore small resemblance, indeed, to the camp of a God-chosen people or a holy nation. Nevertheless, in emphatic distinction from the world and its adherents, we are told that God "hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel. According to this time it shall be said of Jacob and of Israel, What hath God wrought!"²

In like manner, the spectacle presented by the history of the Christian Church has been but too often marred by

¹ Josh. iii. 4.

² Numb. xxiii. 21, 23.

analogous relapses and inconsistencies, which give occasion to the scoff of the enemy at the presumed sanctity and superiority of her children over the rest of the world. To the last, every Christian feels that his own personal experience only reflects that of all his fellow-believers when it testifies far more to the presence and mercy of the Divine Leader than to the worth of his followers.

3. *The Day of Atonement.*

Besides the types found in the record of events and experiences, we have a no less striking series in the ordinances instituted for the education of the ancient people in the knowledge and worship of God. One of the most noteworthy features in regard to the Mosaic law is the entire absence of any injunction to offer prayer. There was no encouragement given in it to address God, nor, among the multitudinous directions in matters of ritual and religious observances, is there a single command to pray, nor any formula for prayer. Instead, the one great and frequent duty of the Israelite was to offer sacrifice, as if by this means alone it was possible at that time for sinful man to draw nigh to God.

This sacrificial aspect of the whole economy was undoubtedly designed to impress the mind of the worshipper with his unworthiness, with the distance which separated him from the holy and righteous Jehovah, and to suggest the necessity of a Mediator between man and God. The intimation conveyed in the many sin-offerings and burnt-offerings was that the blood of the sacrifice was a substitute and a redemption for the sinner's own life; and he, in making his offering, confessed his sins, and transferred them by symbol to the head of the victim. These central ideas of the Mosaic dispensation were par-

ticularly illustrated in the directions for the greatest of the national offerings next to the Passover. It was made for the whole people, by the high-priest, on the Day of Atonement.

According to the injunction in the sixteenth chapter of Leviticus, the tenth day of the seventh, or sacred, month was to be observed yearly by the whole people as a day of humiliation before God for their sins.¹ On that day the high-priest, as the mediator of the nation, was to enter the Most Holy Place, which was separated from the sanctuary by the veil, to make the great atonement before the mercy-seat.²

The high-priest was to do this altogether unattended and alone. The entire Temple, with its numerous courts, both those within for the priests and the vast enclosures for the people, were to be impressively deserted, and only the footfall of the high-priest was to be heard traversing them, while the assembled multitude remained without, in silent and penitential attitude.

Before, however, the high-priest could make the atonement for the people, it was directed that he should qualify himself for this office by a private sacrifice more costly

¹ Lev. xvi. 29.

² The name translated in our version "mercy-seat" means a "covering over," not in the sense of a literal cover or lid to the Ark, but a moral "covering over." The Septuagint therefore translates it "the propitiatory covering." Above it was the bright cloud, or *Shekinah*, which was the visible token of the Divine Presence. At either end of it were Cherubim, who veiled their faces from the *Shekinah* with their wings while bending their gaze upon the mercy-seat. Its symbolic import, in its position between God himself and the Tables of the Law within the Ark, is the highest conveyed by any material object in the Old Testament ritual. The holy, righteous, and broken Law was there to witness against the sinner to the God who must punish sin; but here was a golden propitiatory covering between the Law and God, which the greatest spirits of heaven are represented as contemplating.

than that offered for the whole nation. Taking the blood of a bullock, he approached that mysterious veil which separated the sanctuary, which only the priests could enter, from the Most Holy Place, which could be entered only by himself, on this single occasion, once a year. He was enjoined to light his censer, on his way, with coals from the altar of burnt-offerings, and not to pass within the veil until he had sprinkled the sacrificial blood before him, while he filled the place with a cloud of incense, so that he should not look towards the mercy-seat, lest he die.

Having thus prepared himself to be the mediator between the people and their God, he came out to the door of the Temple, and two goats were brought him, upon which he cast lots—one lot for sacrifice to the Lord, the other for the “scape-goat,” a term which should be translated for the “removal” or “separation.” They both, however, formed *one* sin-offering, the second removing or bearing far away the sins atoned for by the blood of the first.¹ After slaying the first goat, the high-priest entered again within the veil to procure with this sacrifice the remission of the sins of the people, and their reconciliation with God. He then came out, and cleansed with the sprinkling of blood all the sacred vessels, altars, and courts of the Temple, as if, on account of the sins of the people, even their most sacred things had become unacceptable in the pure sight of God. After this, the live goat was brought to the high-priest, who, laying both hands on its head, confessed all his sins and those of the people, as if to transfer them to the head of the goat, who should bear their iniquities far away into the wilderness.

To those among the ancient people who endeavored to penetrate to the meaning of this great symbolic ritual, its

¹ Lev. xvi. 5.

lessons were neither difficult nor obscure. All real symbolism has for its intention the suggestion of profound truths, its own function being to awaken and stimulate the mind to their investigation. That the Mosaic symbolism did tend thus to enlighten the mind of the ancient Church is shown unequivocally by its effects. From the days of the wilderness onwards, in spite of the darkness which often characterized the political life of the nation, a continuous spiritual growth is to be remarked in the writers of the Old Testament. If we compare the discernment of the law in the time of David with that of the age of the wilderness, we already find a sensible advance. In Solomon's age and immediately thereafter, the psalms of Asaph breathe a deep insight into the nature of sin, and the need of something more than ceremonial cleanness to be acceptable in the sight of God. When we pass to the prophets, whose era began some two centuries later, the spirituality of God's requirements, and the necessity of inward as well as outward conformity to his law, are so forcibly presented that no one can fail to observe how steady and how great the progress was under that divine "schoolmaster," as St. Paul termed the Law, which educated the world for the reception of the spiritual kingdom of Christ.

The first and plainest lesson taught by this great ceremonial of the atonement was the difficulty with which man, whose heart has a bias to evil from his birth, could approach the righteous and pure God. Even of the chosen people, only one person was permitted to approach the throne of grace, and he but once a year. Even then he could not presume to look towards the mercy-seat lest he die, because therein was the testimony against him and his people.¹

¹ Lev. xvi. 13.

With this lesson was involved the recognition of the necessity for a mediator between man and God, for this was pre-eminently the office of the high-priest, which no one could share with him. But it was not until he had offered his own sacrifice that his intercession for the people could be made. Then, when the atonement made by the blood which he had taken within the veil into the presence of God had been accepted by him, the high-priest came out, to symbolize by the ordinance of the scape-goat that another should bear away the sin and the punishment of the penitent nation.

In view of these features in the greatest observance in the ancient ritual, it is impossible to overlook the significance of that event which marked the death of Christ, recorded by the evangelists, without, however, a word of comment. "Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice and said, 'It is finished,' yielded up the ghost. And behold, the veil of the Temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom."¹ The central doctrine of Christianity is that the death of Jesus was sacrificial and atoning, the fulfilment of that of which every antecedent sacrifice was a type and a prophecy. Previous to his coming, all nations offered sacrifices, although they could scarcely tell why. Since his coming, sacrifices have ceased in the case of many heathen peoples—a fact difficult to explain, as in ancient times the rite was so universally practised. After the atonement had been made, the relation of God to the world was immediately different; there could no longer be the veil between him and the sons of men, and all could now come boldly to the throne of grace, assured that their great High-priest ever liveth at the right hand of God to make intercession for the penitent ones of earth. The grand symbolism of the ancient

¹ Matt. xxvii. 50, 51; Mark xv. 37, 38; Luke xxiii. 45; John xix. 30.

law is thus found to foreshadow, in the minutest particulars, the most solemn and tender message of the Gospel of Christ, which both enjoins and encourages prayer to the Father by every one, at all times and in all places.¹

4. *The Typical Element in Written Prophecy and in Single Incidents.*

Having considered these examples of those which may be termed purely typical Messianic prophecies, it is proper to direct attention to the wider subject of the typical element in written prophecies, and its relation to prophetic methods in general. It should be borne in mind, to begin with, that, with rare exceptions, the language of prophecy must of necessity be figurative and general. It would be unreasonable to expect that predictions, the fulfilment of which depended upon the future action of beings endowed with free-will, should be expressed in the same terms as those of a coming eclipse; for the foreknowledge of the Deity, from which prophecy derives its inspiration, is not, so to speak, of the nature of a mathematical fact. Men fulfil God's special purposes of their own accord, and by actions for which they alone are responsible, and a divinely inspired prophecy of a future human action should therefore partake of the freedom of moral laws, and not of the fixed rules belonging to lifeless matter.

In correspondence with a great feature in the kingdom of life itself, where we find that the highest and most diversified forms appear to have been typified by the simpler creatures which existed many ages before them, we often meet in the Bible with prophecies plainly intended

¹ Christ, the High-priest of mankind, is the fitting theme of the Epistle to the Hebrews, a subject to which we shall refer more fully in the exposition of Psalm cx.

to refer to two separate events, in which the earlier serves as an image or type of the later and more special fulfilment. A striking instance of this is furnished in a great prophecy uttered by Christ himself. In the three first Gospels we have recorded a distinct and circumstantial prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem and the overthrow of the Temple, which, before it ends, refers very clearly to the much greater theme of the destruction of the world itself.¹ All the circumstances of suddenness and calamity to those in Judea who did not escape when their time came are but instructive types to correspond with the tremendous events of the Day of the Son of Man. Just where the division lies between that which refers only to the Jewish judgment and that which refers to the Great judgment has been a much-disputed point, for the latter seems, in the passage in Matthew xxiv. 29, to develop as a direct outgrowth from its really long antecedent type. In like manner, we find the same type principle in many of the most unmistakable Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament. The prophecy will commence with a prediction about certain events or persons, but it soon becomes evident that language is used which can be construed as applicable to none other than the Messiah.

So extensively pervading do we find this typical element in the Old Testament that not infrequently a distinctly prophetic aspect is thereby imparted to separate incidents, both in biography and history. A noteworthy illustration of this is found in the memorable account of the offering-up of Isaac, as related in Genesis xxii. It is a striking testimony to the naturalness of the memoirs of the patriarchs, that the brief and unadorned story of their lives yet gives to each so perfect an individuality that every one forms substantially the same mental conception of

¹ Matt. xxiv. ; Mark xiii. ; Luke xxi.

the personality of the three patriarchs. In the case of Abraham, a sentiment of reverence seems fitly to belong to the great and good Father of the Faithful in all ages and of all races. His simple dignity and strength of character suggest the reflection from the Divine Father, who himself bestowed upon Abraham the greatest title ever borne by a man, that of "My Friend."

It was to this man, after the hopes of long years had been fulfilled in a son born in his old-age, and who had grown to be his daily companion, that the terrible word came, the certainty of which he was not allowed to doubt, that he should take that son to a distant spot and there put him to death in sacrifice. In those times such a command would have none of the strangeness to Abraham which it has to us, and which would have led him to question it; for human sacrifices, especially of children by their parents, were so common that it is almost certain that Abraham must have known of their occurrence among his own family relatives in Mesopotamia.

The painful iteration "take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest" seems given as much for the purpose of indicating the magnitude of the sacrifice as the spirit of obedience which was to be tested by it. That there was some special design in the selection by God of the site of the sacrifice is plain from the fact that were it simply a mountain-top which was needed, there were many such in the neighborhood of Beer-sheba, where Abraham's tent was then pitched, especially to the south and southeast. Instead of this, the heart of the father is wrung with a trial which lasts during all the weary hours of two days and the morning of the third, before he approaches the dreaded place appointed. That this memorable spot would never be a forgotten one in the family of the patriarchs, and later in the national tradi-

tion, is inevitable, and therefore it is that we have it identified in verse 14 with the Mount Moriah on which the Temple was afterwards built—"As it is said to this day, In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen;" though this is a sentence plainly added to the text in subsequent times by some writer of the age of the Book of Kings.

The pathetic words of Isaac in verses 7 and 8, asking of his father where was the lamb for the burnt-offering, elicit from Abraham an unconscious prophecy, which came from him evidently when he could scarcely know what he was saying: "My son, God will provide himself a lamb." Hence the name left upon the place—"Jehovah-jireh, or the Lord will provide," *i. e.*, his sacrifice—appropriately closes a narrative in which, in every detail and incident, the Christian finds the whole doctrine of redemption revealed under a most touching aspect.

Here we have one to whom, of all men, most pertains the title of Father freely yielding up to a sacrificial death his only and dearly beloved son. We have the son, at the command of the father, willingly obedient unto death. Isaac even appears as the type of Christ in that he himself carried the wood for the sacrifice up the ascent of the mountain; and, lastly, we have the sojourn of the Son of God in the power of the grave, fully typified in the three days' bitter trial of the earthly type of the Divine Father himself.

Among many other incidents in the sacred history which bear a like typical import is one which is distinctly affirmed in the New Testament to have afforded more than a simple illustration of the manner of Christ's death, and of its saving efficacy. At the hardest and most trying juncture in the march through the wilderness, when the children of Israel were obliged to pass into the great eastern desert to compass the land of Edom, we

are told that "the soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way."¹ They turned against God and against Moses as they had repeatedly done before, with the old complaint, "Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? for there is no bread, neither is there any water; and our soul loatheth this light bread"—the manna.

The term "fiery serpents" graphically describes the venomous vipers which to this day abound in many deserted localities in Palestine, as well as among the rocks and bushes of the desert. Deaths from the bite of these reptiles are very numerous both among the peasantry and the Bedouins, and accompanied with the most acute suffering from thirst, inflammation, and enormous swelling, first of the bitten limb or part, then of the whole body. The universal habit of the poorer classes in that warm climate of going barefoot also renders them peculiarly liable to the attack of these stealthy creatures, which are often so closely assimilated in color to the gray rocks which they frequent as not to be seen until the moment of the fatal encounter.

The Divine method of salvation from this visitation consisted in a single look of faith towards the brazen serpent, which was lifted high above the camp. Corresponding to this, we read in the New Testament that "as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life."² The points of contact between the type and the antitype are here as numerous as they are remarkable. There is no meaning whatever in the Cross if it do not represent in the spiritual world of man just what the lifted serpent represented in the camp of the Israelites. Human nature

¹ Numb. xxi. 4.

² John iii. 14.

has been fatally wounded, and the wise and thoughtful men in every age have been perplexed to know how it can be made whole. After all the earnest and sincere efforts which have been put forth, the systems established, and the reforms attempted throughout the world, it still remains that the most effective means has been the Cross—the most inexplicable on ordinary principles. History has, indeed, fulfilled the prophecy of Jesus when he said, “And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.”¹ Untold multitudes in all the ages since have directed their eyes towards the Uplifted One, and have thereby been restored to a higher and a better life. But as there was nothing visible in the Mosaic sign which would account for its saving powers, so it has ever been the problem of unbelief in what way the Cross has fulfilled thus wonderfully these prophetic words of Christ. How was it, indeed, except by its inherent spiritual power, always operating for the rescue of men from the sting of death by sin through Him who, sharing with men in their suffering humanity, “in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh?”²

¹ John xii. 32.

² Rom. viii. 3.

CHAPTER VI.

THE PROPHET LIKE UNTO MOSES.

IN the eighteenth chapter of Deuteronomy, from the fifteenth to the nineteenth verses, there occurs a remarkable passage, in which Moses is represented as informing his people that God would comply with their natural petition that they should not be left alone without some one like himself to act as mediator between them and Jehovah. "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken; according to all that thou desiredst of the Lord thy God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, Let me not hear again the voice of the Lord my God, neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not. And the Lord said unto me, They have well spoken that which they have spoken. I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him."

The passage follows directly upon a strict prohibition, which begins with verse ninth of this chapter, against the resort by the people to necromancers, observers of times, diviners, consultants with familiar spirits, charmers, wizards, and witches, thus explicitly forbidding all attempts to trench upon the Divine prerogative of foreknowledge.

Occurring in this connection, therefore, it serves to separate, in the most emphatic manner, the function and character of the Prophet of Jehovah from any resemblance to those impostors who are to be found in such variety in every age, who trade upon human helplessness as regards the future. Instead of depending upon characters like these, the people are directed to await the coming of another Prophet, who, like Moses, should be their mediator with God, and who would be empowered to speak the Divine word with the authority of the Lawgiver himself.

Such a promise as this met a want or craving to be possessed of some means of obtaining supernatural guidance in public and private exigencies, common among ancient peoples; a desire which even the most advanced modern civilization has been unable entirely to suppress. Hence it was inevitable that the solemn sanction given here to the prophetic office should lead many fraudulent claimants to assume its high prerogative. A very simple test is therefore given in verses 20-22 against false prophets, by which they may be known in their true character.

Those interpreters who see no especial reference to the Messiah in this passage generally regard it as a vindication of the position of the great body of the Hebrew prophets, introduced here into the law in connection with the ordinances relative to the kings and to the priesthood in the sections just preceding. By it the people are commanded to resort wholly to them, instead of to the various forms of heathen fetich. The traditions, so to speak, of the Hebrew prophets, as a class, were far more elevated in moral tone than any which can be adduced as belonging to the observers of times and diviners among the superstitious Gentiles. Hence this passage, with its lofty ideal of the office itself, is held to give the weightiest ratification to the prophet's message as equal even to that

of him who first talked with God face to face in the mount.

It is also urged with much force that a command to await such a distant event as the coming of the Messiah would scarcely offset the frequent temptation to have recourse to the forbidden arts, while, on the contrary, the prophets were always at hand, and were often so numerous as to form schools or societies, which exercised for many generations as powerful an influence in the guidance of the people as that of the priesthood itself.

This whole interpretation, however, is open to the obvious criticism that nothing can make it appear as the natural sense of the wording of the passage in question. The exposition that the words "a prophet—like unto me—unto him shall ye hearken—my words in his mouth," etc., are so impersonal and general that they mean all the prophets of after-times, suggests a strain to the rules of grammar which savors too much of theoretical exigencies to account for it. There is no parallel in the Hebrew of the Bible, or indeed in any other language, to the employment of a singular noun with singular suffixes as a collective or generic term in the fashion in which the phrase "a prophet" is used, both directly and by reference, throughout this passage.

The employment of nouns in the singular as generic or collective terms is common to all languages, as in the phrase "the king can do no wrong;" but the context never fails to show that no particular individual can be meant. A good example of this is to be found, in this very connection, in the latter part of chapter xvii., where certain regulations are laid down to be observed by the Nation's King, when such should be chosen. As there can be only one king at a time, these injunctions are legitimately referred to one individual, just as it is usual now

to speak of the Pope as if he were always one and the same. But such individual designation would plainly be inadmissible in the case of the numerous contemporary priests and prophets. Therefore it is that even among the mediæval rabbis, who had every motive to refer these words to another than the Messiah, many of them felt obliged, by the evident construction of the sentences, to choose Joshua or David or Jeremiah as the person meant by the oracle.

On the contrary, it may be asked why this unusual and misleading method of designating the prophetic office should have been chosen, when it was not thought of in the parallel case of the order of priests. The latter was not only a more continuous and more organized body than that of the prophets, and therefore more suitable to be spoken of collectively, but also it was distinctly embodied, as it were, in the person of the high-priest. Such a sentence, therefore, as "Jehovah will raise unto thee a Priest" might be made to appear, with some effort, as a poetical reference to him who stood as the personification of the priesthood. As no such language or conception in regard to him is to be found, it seems still more unnatural to find it used in reference to an order which never had an official head or representative.

Without the interference of preconceived ideas, the inference naturally left on the mind by the perusal of this passage is that the nation, by this language, was designedly led to look for the coming of another prophet, who also would be another lawgiver and the sole leader of the people, and in his relation both to God and to them would be the counterpart of him who stood as their mediator on the dread day of Horeb. That this language did have that effect in after-times is well known to have been the case.¹

¹ John vi. 14.

Instead, then, of the division of the applicability of these words among themselves, as a class, by the many prophets in after-ages, so that the Messiah can share them only in the sense that he also would be a prophet—like unto Moses, as a Jonah and a Jeremiah were also like unto Moses—the true relation of the prophets to this passage is just the reverse. Because they partook in limited measure of the functions of such specially commissioned messengers from God as Moses and the Messiah, rather than of those exercised merely by right of inheritance, like the priests, therefore they could speak with high authority—though in no case, as will be shown, to the extent of the authority of Moses, much less of that of the Messiah. Throughout Old Testament history we do not find that the office of the ordinary prophet carries with it any legislative, executive, priestly, or mediatorial authority whatever.¹ As far as the nation was concerned, his duty was to warn, to reprove, to exhort, and to instruct. In many respects the relation of the prophets to the people resembled that of the monks of the Middle Ages to the Christian nations of Europe, or that which the different classes of dervishes hold to the Mohammedan world at the present day. So pre-eminently did the former appear in the character of preachers of righteousness that the phrase “to prophesy” gradually came to mean merely to preach, as we note in several passages in the New Testament.² The gift of prophecy itself, therefore, accredited them only as the chosen messengers of God, and to that extent alone do these words contain reference to them.

How much more and how far beyond this are the powers of the Prophet promised in these words it is easy to

¹ Samuel wielded executive authority not as a prophet, but as a judge, of which order he was the last.

² Acts xiii. 1; xv. 32; 1 Cor. xiv. 1, 37 sqq.; Titus i. 12 et al.

show. It should here be remarked that the request of the people referred to in the promise was for some one to stand for them in the same mediatorial relation in which Moses stood at Horeb. It is too much overlooked by those who refer this passage to the prophetic order that the awe with which the great scene of Sinai inspired the people made them fear that no one of them could ever venture to approach their God, and that therefore the burden of their petition is not for diviners to foretell the future, but for a man who could speak with God for them. Now, no one after Moses ever assumed any such place for himself, nor, in fact, did such a position properly pertain to the office of a prophet. It was the express function of the high-priest, not that of the prophet, to appear, on the great Day of Atonement, as the mediator between the nation and its God. The promised Prophet, therefore, was to unite in himself the offices of both priest and prophet, as Moses only had been called to do.

It can clearly be demonstrated as a fact of history that the whole Hebrew race regarded the relation of Moses to it as so exceptional that no subsequent personage, prophet, priest, or king, was ever supposed by it to be like unto him in office or position. The consistent testimony of the nation shows that to the Hebrew mind the conception of the coming of One like unto Moses would also convey the intimation of another great national exigency, at least equal in importance to the deliverance from the Bondage. Moses was not only the prophet of the nation, but its sole founder, statesman, and legislator. It was therefore natural that this Mosaic prophecy should early have come to be regarded as an especial and important prediction of the advent of the Messiah, and as a pledge of the survival of Israel until his coming.

A collateral and impartial testimony to this fact is to

be found in the belief in the coming of the Messiah by the sect of the Samaritans. As already stated in the Introduction, these people claim to be the legitimate successors of the old kingdom of Israel under the ten tribes; and on account of their rejection of the dynasty of David, their Scriptures comprise only the Pentateuch. Hence the existence of this doctrine among them constitutes an unimpeachable witness to the ancient interpretation of this passage as foreshadowing the appearing of the Prophet, who, like Moses, "when he is come, he will tell us all things," as the woman at Jacob's well expressed it.¹

So far, indeed, were the prophets from assuming to themselves the prerogative of Moses as a legislator, that we find them inculcating, with ever-increasing emphasis, the jealous observance of his laws as the highest individual and national duty. It was expressly forbidden to any one in the nation, of whatever order or rank, to repeal or to add unto a single ordinance of the law; and these teachers of the people insisted upon the inviolability of the work of Moses with a tenacity of conservatism unequalled before or since.² A fitting close to their burden is reached when we read the last injunction of the last prophet in the Old Testament: "Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments."³

This feeling deepened in the nation with each succeeding age, until in the fervid days of the Maccabees it reached the point of fanaticism, rendering it as impossible for any one to put himself on an equality with Moses as it would be now to find a Chinese mandarin who would

¹ John iv. 25. On the Messianic doctrines of the Samaritans, consult the highly rationalistic but learned work of Dr. Theo. Keim, "*Geschichte Jesu*," Band I. 518.

² Deut. iv. 2; xii. 32; xiii. 1 sqq.

³ Mal. iv. 4.

feel entitled to alter the rules of Confucius, or a Moslem Ulem who would abrogate the Koran. It was on this account that the Apostles appealed so repeatedly and unhesitatingly to the common understanding of this prophecy in their day—that only the Messiah could be the Prophet here promised—when advocating the claims of Jesus to their countrymen. He alone, of all who had ever appeared among them, had ventured to speak like another Moses.¹ The force of this appeal becomes apparent when we consider the true significance and results of the assumption on the part of Jesus to speak not only with the authority of Moses, but even in a higher tone than he. There can be no doubt that the fierce opposition so soon encountered by Jesus, especially from among the ruling classes, was excited in great measure by his thus claiming for himself the full rank and powers of a divinely commissioned lawgiver.

The report of the Sermon on the Mount is a striking illustration of this fact. It should be remembered that this was the ordination sermon, so to speak, to that band of men who were afterwards to set up and to spread Christ's kingdom on the earth. In that discourse Jesus more than fulfils this prophecy, for he uses throughout the language of an Eastern sovereign whose single will is the only law of the realm. To that vast multitude of hearers, trained wholly in the world of Jewish thought; to the scribes present on that occasion, who regarded even the letters of the law as ineffably sacred—such expressions as “think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets” must have sounded amazing. Which of the old prophets would have imagined such a thing of himself? Of what man could it be thought possible that he could destroy the law?

¹ Acts iii. 22 sqq., and vii. 37.

The same lofty tone, like the voice of the Angel of the Covenant himself, pervades all the rest of the discourse. "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you for my sake, for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you"—putting his disciples, suffering for his sake, on a level with the old prophets who suffered for God's sake. Also mark his repeated comment on the law itself—"But I say unto you;" and, finally, his unhesitating assumption of the judgeship at the last: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name done many wonderful works?" All these and many other similar expressions are utterly unlike those which an ancient prophet would have dared to use. Who ever prophesied in a man's name before? or in a man's name did wonderful works? It was wholly in the nature of things, therefore, that "when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes."

Such an assumption of authority could be justified only by the most unmistakable evidence that the speaker was indeed a Prophet like unto Moses, or yet greater than he. We cannot, in truth, adequately measure the extent and nature of such authority, nor the significance of its assumption on the part of Jesus, unless we first appreciate what the office of *the* Prophet of the Israel or Church of God implies, and how its prerogative must transcend every other in the world. It is desirable, therefore, to rid ourselves at the outset of some misconceptions connected with the idea of prophecy, which often obscure, if they do not discredit, the true Biblical conception of the term.

To many persons the name of prophet represents only

one who has, or who claims to have, the power of foretelling that which is to come to pass. Such pretensions, however, have been so commonly characteristic of ignorant and superstitious states of society that the intelligence both of communities and individuals may fairly be gauged by the extent of their credulity in omens, oracles, fortune-tellers, and clairvoyants, and thus a natural presumption is often raised against everything bearing the name of prophecy. It needs but little investigation of the Bible, however, to perceive that nothing can be more unlike its prophecy than the pretences of the magician or the soothsayer. In this very passage we have the sternest reprobation of such characters, for it is contrary to the whole principle of Biblical prophecy that it should have anything to do with mere curiosity, whether as regards the future, or any other subject.

Nevertheless, it was essential to the true prophet that he should be able to show that he spoke not of himself, but was one who truly came with the Word of the Lord. To establish such overwhelming authority for his message, it was both reasonable and necessary that he should produce some sure sign of a Divine commission. According to the injunction in this very passage, men always had the right to ask of him who claimed to be a prophet that he should attest his utterance by an unmistakable supernatural sanction. Thus it was that God, who alone can make known the future, endowed his messengers with a veritable power to foretell of that future only so much as pertained to, or would accredit, their message, and nothing further.

Instead of being a faculty or gift residing in each prophet, which he could exert at will, for merely personal purposes, he had no command over it, either for his own or others' uses. He spoke solely as God suffered him to

speak. When he did foretell what was to come, nothing could be more unlike the fashion of human oracles. Without the least qualification or provision for doubtful eventualities, the eye of true prophecy sees the end from the beginning, though it may be many ages distant. There is no such thing as conditional or alternative prophecies, like those of the Delphian oracle, in the whole Bible. It is this fundamental distinction of Bible prophecy which merits candid investigation, for in this is manifested its world-wide difference from any possible human predictions. The oracles of antiquity invariably dealt with the immediate human interests of those who sought them. No principle of right or of wrong, of truth or of falsehood, had any connection with their dark sayings, nor was their perspective of vision wider than the thoughts of the day when they were uttered.

When we turn to the Bible, a very different feature soon challenges our attention. Account for it as we may, there are to be found in this book, without question, certain perfect statements of the most important developments of the history of mankind, made long before it was possible to foresee them. No human interests or influences could have shaped those developments to this accord, because the intervening generations are too numerous for a single trace of such influence to survive them. The question, therefore, which forces itself on the mind is whether this feature of the Scriptures be only an apparent and fortuitous resemblance to actual history, or whether it be prophecy, the unfolding of the purpose of Him who alone can have a purpose throughout the ages.

No sanction can be greater than this. He who can utter such a Word must be sent. The voice on Horeb itself was not more impressive than that which is echoed, not by the rocks, but by the centuries; for real prophecy

can only be from on High. It is of the greatest importance to scrutinize thoroughly the word of the prophet from the beginning, to be sure that it can be no other than prophecy—neither the product of mere word-interpretation, on the one hand, nor of simple chance coincidence, on the other. Moses himself should be brought to the test laid down in this same passage. Did he really speak that which only a true prophet could have spoken? If so, can it then be shown that Jesus also was in this great respect a Prophet like unto Moses?

As regards Moses, the answer to this question is to be found in the discourse ascribed to him in the 28th, 29th, and 30th chapters of the Book of Deuteronomy. In this farewell address to his people, as it may be termed, it cannot be denied that he fully commits himself to the character of a prophet, as he details at great length the strange destiny which the future has in store for them. Fully to appreciate the argument which can be drawn from his words, we must take the well-known history of the world, using for a commentary on Moses only the most undoubted historical facts.

The first extended and authentic account which we possess of the Hebrew nation from other sources than the Bible is to be found in the annalistic inscriptions of the Assyrians. Here we have the best of all sources of historic information—namely, contemporary records, and those, too, of enemies and conquerors. In the earliest of these, we find the kingdoms of Samaria and Judah already long existing, and approaching their fall; and in every case the cuneiform tablets fully corroborate the well-known narrative of the Hebrew writings. The names of the Israelitish kings Menahem, Jehu, and Hoshea, and of the kings of Judah, Uzziah (Azariah), Ahaz, and Hezekiah, are thus brought to us in clearer historical certainty

and connection than is the case with any single name in the annals of Greece or Rome.

How did their Assyrian contemporaries regard them? Was there at that time anything exceptional among the Hebrews which distinguished them from the neighboring kingdoms, so that their subsequent remarkable history could have been in any form or degree surmised? On the contrary, it is plain that their conquerors scarcely deigned to notice them among the crowd of other nationalities whom they wasted and led captive. It strikes us strangely to find the familiar names of our Bible almost lost among long lists of kings and races whom the Assyrian monarchs regarded as of greater importance, although now these latter have so utterly disappeared that hardly an idea can be associated with them.¹

¹ We may cite for illustration one out of a number of instances from the annals of Tiglath-pileser II., translated by the late Mr. George Smith, of the British Museum, in which, after one battle with Sarduri, King of Kummuhu, Tiglath-pileser captured 72,950 soldiers, whereupon "the Assyrian monarch now transported numbers of the captives taken in these wars into other countries—1223 people of Hamath were transported to the head-waters of the Tigris; 600 women of Amlate, Damuni, and Dur, places in Babylonia, were sent into Kunalia, Hazarra, and various other places in Unqui; a number of women of the Gutu and Sangibuti, together with 1200 men of the Illili, and 6200 of the Nakkip and Buda, were placed in Simirra, Arga, and various other cities of Hamath. It is evident from these lists that the men from one district were mixed with the women from another, with a view to the destruction of national feeling, and the fusion of the races into the Assyrian empire. These conquests and changes wrought by Tiglath-pileser were brought to a fitting termination by his receiving the tribute of all the kings of Syria, and some of those in Palestine. This list includes the names of Kustaspi of Kummuhu, Rezon of Syria, Menahem of Samaria, Hiram of Tyre, Sibith-bahili of Gubal, Urikki of Qua, Pisisir of Karchemesh, Eni-il of Hamath, Pannamu of Samala, Tarhulara of Gauguma, Sulumal of Milid, Dadilu of Kaska, Vassurmi of Tabal, Ushitti of Yuna, Urpalla of Tuhana, Tuhammi of Istunda, Urimmi of Husinna, and Zabibe, queen of the Arabs."—"Assyria from the Earliest Times to the Fall of Nineveh" (p. 83), Geo. Smith.

All the experience of the world at that date but pointed the sneer of Rabshekah at the insignificance of the kingdom to which he offered "two thousand horses, if thou be able on thy part to set riders upon them." "Hath any of the gods of the nations delivered at all his land out of the hand of the king of Assyria? . . . that the Lord should deliver Jerusalem out of mine hand?"¹ No human vision could have foreseen that this diminished and despised people, soon to undergo that terrible ordeal of captivity, the sole object of which was national destruction, should not only survive both Assyrian and Babylonian captors, but was thereafter to enter upon another and far more wonderful phase of its history. Who could then believe the answer to this insolent Assyrian taunt given in the words of Micah and Isaiah, that the Jehovah of Jerusalem was to become the God worshipped of all nations?² We are led, even at this stage in the history of the Hebrews, to ask what principle of survival existed among them at that time which rendered their future so marvellously unlike that of the multitude of cognate Shemitic races which surrounded them?

The new career begun by this people at Babylon of itself constitutes the great exceptional fact in the world's story. No longer possessed of a country, they wandered among the nations, and erected the synagogue wherever there was a sufficient degree of civilization to attract a commercial race. The more settled the social condition of the world, the more they flourished. The Persian and after that the Greek rule were great improvements upon Assyrian brutality, and the regulated system of Roman sway tended still further to the increase of the Jews in number and wealth. This comparatively short period of prosperity, however, served only to enhance the terrible

¹ 2 Kings xviii. 23; 33-35.

² Mic. iv. 1; Isa. ii. 2.

character of the final catastrophe, when the long tragedy of Judah began.

Eighteen centuries have passed since the last overthrow of Jerusalem, and this nation remains, the only continuous living name through them all. Dispersed among a greater number of races and creeds than after the Babylonish captivity, with no common centre, political, social, or religious, everywhere exposed to a hatred which frequently has sought nothing less than their total destruction, the Jews have been hunted from country to country, and from age to age, down to our own day.

We need hardly say that there has been no experience like this, no other similar fact to do duty as a precedent, so that a prophetic venture could be based upon it. Yet the whole of this unexampled story was related in advance by Moses in the Book of Deuteronomy. Accepting, for argument's sake, the very latest date for the composition of this book suggested by modern rationalism—namely, a short time before the Captivity—the horizon of the writer even then could have been but that of the age of the cuneiform inscriptions. Who could have foretold, at that date, the future of Rome in her infancy from among the surrounding Latin tribes. But, in comparison with the story of Judah, that of Rome is simplicity itself. To show how “sure” the word of prophecy is, and how solitary its voice compared with all other voices in the world, we need only review briefly the language ascribed to the great Lawgiver in the 28th chapter of this book.

The style of this remarkable address is more in keeping with the earliest age ascribed to its composition, that of Moses himself, than of any other. The nation was still in the childhood stage of its existence and education. The language of a teacher would naturally adapt itself to the existing state in the intellectual development of the peo-

ple. Consequently, we find that the most material and sensuous objects of dread are first made prominent in its threatenings—the failure or devastation of the crops, pestilence, and the spread of loathsome diseases—visitations always associated with the idea of divine displeasure by ancient peoples. Moses then continues: “The Lord shall smite thee with madness and blindness: and thou shalt be only oppressed and spoiled evermore, and no man shall save thee. Thy sons and thy daughters shall be given unto another people, and thine eyes shall look, and fail with longing for them all the day long: and there shall be no might in thine hand: and thou shalt be only oppressed and crushed alway: so that thou shalt be mad for the sight of thine eyes which thou shalt see.”¹

A remarkable passage here follows; still more noticeable on account of the prediction of an experience belonging to the times of the earlier calamities of the nation, but not characteristic of its later destruction by the Romans. This last is reserved, as we shall see, for another part of the prophecy; and the two sections should be carefully compared in detail. In the earlier section we read, “The Lord shall bring thee, and thy king which thou shalt set over thee, unto a nation which neither thou nor thy fathers have known; and there shalt thou serve other gods, wood and stone.”² This was fulfilled to the letter in the case of the ten tribes, who were removed with their king to Armenia, and became lost among the idolatrous people of that region; and then, again, in the case of Judah and its king, by the destruction of Jerusalem under Nebuchadnezzar.

From that time also began the wonderful fulfilment of the prediction in verse 37: “And thou shalt become an astonishment, a proverb, and a byword, among all nations

¹ Deut. xxviii. 28–34.

² Deut. xxviii. 36.

whither the Lord shall lead thee." In this respect the experience of this people is unique. The disgrace of defeat has sometimes clung to a race for generations, especially when religious differences have increased the arrogance of the conquerors, as among the Mohammedans; but the universality and persistence of the opprobrium attached to the Jew throughout the world is wholly without its counterpart, and constitutes not the least singular aspect of this strange subject. The Jew, indeed, is the only universal human proverb.¹

After foretelling the uprooting of the nation, with its king, from its home to foreign lands, it might be expected that the prophecy would close. But the subject is taken up again, as if that captivity should be recovered from, and the country repeopled and fortified anew, only to experience a yet more disastrous fate. As marking the approach of a darker doom, the solemn preface contained in verses 49 to 52 ushers in the prophecy beginning with these significant words: "The Lord shall bring a nation against thee from far, from the end of the earth, as swift as the eagle flieth; a nation whose tongue thou shalt not understand; a nation of fierce countenance: and he shall besiege thee in all thy gates, until thy high and fenced walls come down, wherein thou trustedst, throughout all thy land." Then follows the terrible sketch of the horrors of that war. As an addition to the previous section,

¹ An instance of the Moslem contempt for Jews, known to the writer, is a good commentary on this verse, and on verse 63 as well, the scene being in their own old land. The plague having come to Sidon, the native Christians fled to the gardens outside the city, where each family kept a strict quarantine within its own enclosure, a course which the Moslems would not imitate, owing to their fatalistic doctrines. The owner of one of the gardens, seeing a Mohammedan pass the gate, asked how many persons had died of the plague that day in the city. "Seven men and one Jew!" was the characteristic answer.

we have here a conquering people from a more distant land than the former, of a speech more alien than that of Shemitic Nineveh or Babylon; its descriptive symbol the swoop of an eagle on its prey. In contrast, also, to the earlier narrative, the siege and its most ghastly accompaniments are among the chief features of the final catastrophe.

It is difficult to read this passage without seeing in it the Roman eagles, flocking from the farthest ends of the world's greatest empire to the dread meeting-place at Jerusalem. A contemporary Jewish historian has made that tragedy, with all its horrors of starvation and desperate madness among the besieged, familiar to subsequent times as the awful seal to these utterances of Moses. Even the prophecy of a return to Egypt in slave-ships was literally fulfilled. How, furthermore, the hunted life of the outcast people for many a weary century bore out the closing words—from verse 58—of this saddest of human writing is known to all, for the prophecy has become history.

Of course both the experience and the survival of this people are unparalleled in human annals, and the distinct and unequivocal prediction of the whole unmatched story is equally a fact without parallel. But a more impressive consideration still remains. Moses not only foretells all this experience, but he makes the fullest and most emphatic statement of a greater marvel—that this consuming ordeal, which no other race could survive, nevertheless would be powerless to destroy Israel, which would still remain the one undying people. The words of chapter thirty, with which this memorable discourse closes, indicate that the most unknowable of all future facts were clearly revealed to the prophet. Some minds may strive, all through the preceding section, to recognize only the daring guesses of a priest, based upon the well-known

accompaniments of ancient wars, for the purpose of frightening future generations of his people into the keeping of his laws. But the problem still waits for explanation that this people has stood throughout the ages, a witness to the birth, growth, and death of race after race, and that the fact of this survival is an essential part of the prophecy and its abiding proof. Had Israel disappeared at any time during the last three thousand years, Moses, tried by his own test, would have proved to be one to whose words we need not listen. Is it not time to ponder the meaning of a testimony like this, the testimony of thirty centuries?

There must always be power in that which resists Time. So universal is the law of change and ultimate decay in human things, that permanence of life invariably commands attention as something which traverses all experience; and therefore it is that the unceasing fulfilment of the words of Moses transcends explanation. There is, however, another and a greater historical fact still more difficult to account for—the close and profound correspondence with the prophetic words of Jesus to be observed in the rise and permanence of the Christian Church.

No exceptional tenacity of race-life, as in the case of the Hebrew stock, can be supposed here. Composed of the most diverse races and temperaments, the Church has outlived many races already, and certainly depends upon none. Her principle of permanence, therefore, cannot have a *physical* basis, but must rather be looked for in the world of beliefs and doctrines.

It is just at this point that the problem of the Christian Survival grows upon the thoughtful student. The continued existence of opinions and doctrines with unaltered and undiminished living force, throughout great changes of circumstance and historical conditions, is even rarer

than the survival of races and nations; but in this instance, if only ordinary principles are to be applied, not one survival, but a continuous succession of survivals, must be explained. It is not sufficient to discover the reasons why the Church came through the crisis of any one period of her history, as, for example, the struggle of her infancy with the power of Rome. In the case of an individual, the escape from a serious danger in childhood does not insure him against disease or death at any subsequent year or stage of his life. In like manner the perils of the Church have been not only very numerous, but in successive ages very different. Those of the second century were not those of the seventh; and the thirteenth, sixteenth, and eighteenth centuries have each brought for her quite distinct dangers. As we have found in history an answer to the question whether Moses were a prophet, so a brief review of the Christian centuries will present as suggestive a commentary on this question in the case of Jesus.

Historically speaking, the rise of Christianity is remarkable for the absence of any personal share in its promulgation through the world on the part of its Founder. The spread of the Gospel was wholly due to the labors of his apostles after his crucifixion. His followers were neither organized nor led by a Master. What seemed to them his premature and unexpected death completely disconcerted them, and left them without plan or purpose. And when they did go forth, what could be more unpromising than their message to the great Roman world—to believe in a crucified Jew! A message, moreover, heralded by a band of Galilean fishermen, and everywhere discredited by the scornful comment of their own countrymen on the headship of one who had suffered the death of a malefactor.

The long contest which followed with the strongest and ablest political power the world has ever seen, wherein the blood of her children only was shed, is often appealed to as a signal evidence of the indestructible life of the Church, and such undoubtedly it is. But in whatever manner her triumph over imperial Rome be explained, her survival from the internal dangers to which she was thereby inevitably exposed is of more real significance than her victory over external foes. At the very outset, the extension of Christianity was vitally threatened by the natural and earnest desire of its most influential converts to make it a mere branch of Judaism. Freed finally from this danger only by the destruction of Jerusalem, the Church soon entered upon one of the strangest periods in the annals of human thought in her prolonged conflict with Gnosticism. Never before or since in the intellectual and religious world has such an epidemic of unbounded speculation prevailed, attended with so amazing a growth of doctrines and sects. These imperilled the life of the Church far more seriously than did the enmity of the Cæsars, just as diseases often waste armies to a much greater degree than do battles, and her ultimate escape from their influence is no slight testimony to a deep principle of life within.

The union of the Church with the Cæsars proved another peril. One of its many evil results was that by its means ecclesiastical divisions grew into bleeding wounds, serious enough to wither the life of the Eastern branch, and to lead to the only loss of territory in her history by the sword of Islam. The close of the seventh century seemed dark indeed. With four thousand churches in the East destroyed by the Saracens in the short caliphate of Omar,¹ the outlook in the West showed little else than

¹ Gibbon, chap. li.

savage German tribes encamped among ruins, and who, while Christian in name, yet were scarcely more so in reality than the still heathen Scandinavian pirates who had not yet desisted from the work of destruction.

It was during the long centuries from the sixth to the sixteenth that the steady influence of the Church was bringing about the transformation from old Rome and old barbarism into new Europe and modern Christendom. Considering all the elements in the problem, sometimes in the nature of dangers, oftener of obstacles, and bearing in mind also what is implied in a continuous influence of one thousand years, the life of the Church in Europe up to the sixteenth century must be regarded as among the strong arguments for the faith. It can easily be shown that at the close of each century in that long succession the Church emerged stronger and more healthy than she was at its beginning. Even the loss of the East was soon more than compensated for by the complete adhesion of the Western peoples, whose latest converts are now the most powerful and devoted of her sons.

Since the sixteenth century the advance of the Church has been in a geometric ratio. While Buddhism and Islamism stand still, and think of no future, progress is the characteristic idea of Christendom. The England of the sixteenth century, over which the great Elizabeth ruled, had a smaller population than that which is given by the present census of either Ohio or Illinois. But it is not by the visible growth of the mustard-seed that the modern Church is to be judged, so much as by the hidden working of her leaven. By this it has come to pass that, owing to the general expansion she has caused in the world of human opinion, her very enemies now occupy the ground where her sons once stood, and even atheists advocate Christian teaching as their own.

There is more of the Spirit of Christ in both Church and world in this nineteenth century than in all the centuries which have preceded it. The present extent of Christian influence—the sway of Jesus' kingdom of Heaven—is immeasurably advanced from its beginning in the room where the disciples first learned no longer to mourn a dead Master. There is no fact so wonderful on earth. The survival of the Jew is, as we have said, but a minor historical phenomenon as compared with this—the rise and permanence of the Church—because this involves far deeper facts and problems.

For what is the underlying, sustaining principle of the Church—that which has maintained her existence and growth throughout the varying times? Unquestionably it is the dogma of the death and resurrection of Jesus. It is this alone which keeps Christianity alive. If the central significance of this doctrine be removed, there remains to Christianity but a mutilated system of ethics, no more capable of affecting the world, or of holding multitudes of every race to a life-and-death devotion, than ethics is capable of leading men to any self-sacrifice, say, in honor of Socrates or Seneca. Without the Cross and the Resurrection men would have no more reason to serve Jesus than to serve Socrates. On the other hand, the apprehension of the meaning and results of that Death and Resurrection must profoundly modify men. After being convinced that the Cross bore the Son of God, no one can regard the problems of life in the same light as before.

The doctrine of the Cross has always been revolutionary with persons, and hence, sooner or later, with society. The "offence of the Cross" is, therefore, no figurative expression, for every one feels instinctively that to believe in it involves an adjustment of the whole life accord-

ingly. There can be no neutral course between a whole-hearted acceptance, or an equally determined rejection of its claims, and for this reason it has stirred men and nations as no system of philosophy or ethics has ever been able to do. For influence exerted, even unbelievers must admit that its entrance into the world is the most momentous fact of the ages.

Regarded, however, from a natural standpoint, this doctrine is so strange and unique that it is impossible that any one could have invented it, or foreseen its incalculable results. Like Jesus himself, it stands alone. The work of men must cease at death, and only the influences from their previous lives can continue. But here it is Christ's death which we find transforming the terrified fishermen into the apostles, who had power to move the world. That which was naturally regarded by his enemies as the end, was in fact an infinitely greater beginning than any one then in the world could have understood.

But all this was distinctly foreseen and foretold by Jesus. He never mistook the future. In repeated instances his words prove that he looked to overturning all things, not by his life, but by his death. He came, according to his own account, to set mankind at variance, to send, not peace, but a sword, to cast fire on the earth, but he was to accomplish this by being put to death.¹ He certainly, therefore, did not underrate his own personality. The cross was not to make him, he was to make the cross. His language is that of one who knows that he will shake the world—not that of his day only, but the world of all future history—to its foundations, and this by means of the Roman gibbet for criminals. “The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a grain of wheat fall

¹ Matt. x. 35 ; Luke xii. 49.

into the earth and die, it abideth by itself alone ; but if it die, it beareth much fruit. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto myself.”¹ This, we are told, he said, signifying what death he should die.

It is his Death and Resurrection, therefore, which constitute his sole answer to the challenge for evidence. In support of his unprecedented claims, it was demanded of him to adduce a sign which should make men dumb. He does so, leaving history to seal his words. No sign but this: “The Son of man shall be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.”² When again asked for proof, his answer was, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.”³ That his words had a meaning his adversaries well knew ; but the future alone could explain it.

That future has explained it. How can the opposer answer this sign now? From age to age the belief in the death and resurrection of Jesus has caused, in various ways, such general and personal conflict, that it is impossible to do more than allude to it. If opposition could destroy, it has always been opposed. The Jewish rulers thoroughly disbelieved and scorned the idea that he who hung upon the Cross was other than a Galilean peasant, but not more thoroughly than men like Julian, and Paine, and Strauss, and multitudes in every age have likewise done. Nothing in the past or present is so disbelieved in as the Cross. It is a sign always spoken against.⁴ But how is it to be explained? Until the unbeliever can show why it is that the death of Jesus has made him live, against constant opposition, as the most constant power of history, he need not ask us for another sign.

This proof that Jesus was a prophet cannot be evaded by the objector on the supposition that he himself did

¹ John xii. 23, 24, 32. ² Matt. xii. 40. ³ John ii. 19. ⁴ Luke ii. 34.

not foresee the place to be held in the world by the Cross, and that his prophetic utterances are the inventions of his disciples, made for the purpose of neutralizing his sudden and impotent end. They invent the extraordinary paradox of a victorious execution! But how came they to believe in such a victory, even to the extent of being crucified themselves in testimony to it? If Jesus were not a prophet in speaking as he did of the historical importance of his death, it follows that his disciples were so. They chose it for a sign to the world, and committed themselves to the statement that this—in their day—very ordinary event, the crucifixion of a Galilean, was to draw all men to him! Is it not easier to admit that it must have been their unexampled Master who foretold this unexampled wonder of all time?

There is something profoundly impressive in the tone of the language constantly employed by Jesus in regard to the future. It is to be observed not only in especial utterances, though these also there are, but in the calm assumption of his own deathless presence in the world. He is to die, and yet to live, with the coming ages always before him, in a literal, not a figurative, sense. At the close of that terrible denunciation of the men who were leading the doomed nation to ruin, recorded in the twenty-third chapter of Matthew, he spake as never man spoke, thus: "Therefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes; some of them shall ye kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute from city to city. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killeth the prophets, and stoneth them that are sent unto her! how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye

shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.”¹ We know with certainty that he who spoke thus like God, of sending prophets and wise men and scribes for that generation to slay, meant also to predict that Jerusalem was to be destroyed, and the Jewish people scattered for centuries before they should see him again, because his answer to his anxious disciples, as to what it was which he then foretold, is contained in the following chapter.

The discourse in Luke which belongs to this juncture likewise contains the remarkable instructions for the future which Jesus gave to his apostles in the tenth chapter of Matthew. On at least three successive occasions during his ministry did Jesus put his disciples to the training which was to fit them for going into the world and preaching, when he should be no longer with them, telling them, at the same time, of the fate which awaited them. “Behold I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents and harmless as doves. But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to councils, and in their synagogues they will scourge you; yea and before governors and kings shall ye be brought for my sake.”² The hearing and the dealing which should be accorded by the world to his messengers lay all before Him who, we are told by some, was only a carpenter of Nazareth. His fishermen were to stand before kings, because it would be a matter of importance to kings that they should be brought before them. “I will make you fishers of men,” he had aforetime said to those same poor ignorant Galileans, and now kings’ courts and the capitals of empires are named in their honor.

In that future, also, he saw his claims causing every other claim, even the closest of earth, to be as nothing,

¹ Matt. xxiii. 34, 37.

² Matt. x. 16.

among men of every race, though life itself were the price of this allegiance. But such devotion and such opposition have followed his name from age to age. The prophecies of the hid treasure and the pearl of great price have been fulfilled in the case of thousands through centuries, and the world has witnessed the growth of the mustard-seed, and felt the working of the leaven. It has seen as well the ceaseless marvel of the devout acceptance by its leading races, from Jewish hands, of that kingdom fatally rejected by the Jewish people, fulfilling thereby another of the prophetic parables of Jesus, that of the Vineyard. "Therefore say I unto you, the kingdom of God shall be taken away from you, and shall be given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. And he that falleth on this stone shall be broken to pieces: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will scatter him as dust."¹

What utterance of Jesus can be quoted as proof that he did not know the future? Although the writings of every wise man of every nation show conclusively of how little worth is human wisdom in attempting prophecy, nevertheless, who can convince Jesus of error while he looks constantly beyond the horizon possible to a Galilean peasant over all the expanse of time? Does not this ever-present sign in Jesus prove that he is, in truth, the Prophet sent by Him who also warns men that he will require it of them who hearken not to a messenger whom he has so accredited?

¹ Matt. xxi. 43, 44.

CHAPTER VII.

THE HEBREW PROPHETS AND THE SON OF DAVID.

THE Hebrew Prophets, to whom for so many ages the development of the Messianic Promise was committed, form a class to which we find nothing truly corresponding in any other ancient religious system. Unlike a priesthood, the prophets had no settled organization or succession. They performed no rites, and offered no sacrifices. It belonged, rather, to the very conception of a prophet that he came with no inherited or official authority, but only by the direct and special call of God.

In these respects, the prophets were the spiritual successors of the ancient order of the Judges, whose era coincides with the earliest age of the nation's history, when national affairs were administered by men whom the Lord raised up to deliver his people. The judge was regarded as one chosen for his work by Jehovah alone, and was taken from no particular tribe or family, just as, afterwards, the prophet might be a king or a herdsman. This order of Judges terminated with the first of the prophets after Moses—namely, Samuel. It is not difficult to perceive, when the temporal authority of the judge passed, during the life-time of Samuel, from him to the king, that still the lingering belief that God would send other Samuels as religious guides would survive, as a basis for the development of the important prophetic order itself.

The prophet, therefore, always came with the lofty words, "Thus saith the Lord," and to this day the nature

of the message is itself the best attestation to the messengers. When by proper historical methods we reproduce to ourselves that age of the world, it becomes impossible to account for them on natural principles. Compared with any similar ideal in the range of the whole literature of antiquity, the immense superiority of the Hebrew prophets, in their lofty conception of God and of righteousness, is universally admitted. For purity, sincerity, and liberality towards strangers, no men in any other nation have spoken like them. Considering the brutalized condition of the people from whom they sprang, and their surroundings of wide-spread evil, this singular goodness remains to be accounted for, unless, indeed, they were men of God.

Moreover, as the spokesman of Jehovah, whose servants cannot be for hire, the prophet could have no personal or class interest to serve. Consequently in the prophetic writings we find no trace of worldly motive, and scarcely a thought of reward, even in heaven. Sustained by few of the consolations which Christians now lean upon when the world grows dark and death draws near, the old prophets took their stand for the right, at the risk of cruel death, with a heroism truly touching. The world has never failed to acknowledge the moral grandeur belonging to these men, so plainly sealed with the divine imprint of unselfishness. This was the case to the last. John the Baptist, "who did no miracle," was nevertheless at once recognized by his unspiritual generation as one of the old prophets arisen again.

The first notices of them as a distinct order occur in the history of the Court of David, where Nathan and Gad exerted a great influence on more than one memorable occasion.¹ During this period the more ancient title of

¹ 1 Sam. xxii. 5; 2 Sam. vii. 2; xii. 1; xxiv. 11; 1 Kings i. 10 sqq.

Seer was often applied to them.¹ Already, much as it was with the monks, who were the chroniclers of Europe through the Middle Ages, we find allusions to historical writings ascribed to them. Consistently throughout, from Nathan to John the Baptist, they appear as the reprovers of wrong and injustice, whether on the part of kings, rulers, priests, or people; and, in consequence, after the reign of Solomon not an age passes in which we do not read that imprisonment or death was meted out to them on account of their faithfulness.

It was in the long and disastrous decline following upon the division of the nation by Jeroboam that the prophets became the main-stay of true religion in the world. The effect of that division was of necessity ruinous, as well to the spiritual as to the temporal prosperity of Israel. Ephraim and Judah continued in the fiercest civil conflicts, until, as in Germany after the Thirty Years' War, not only was the population frightfully diminished, but a spirit of savagery developed itself among the remaining people which left little of the glories of the Solomonic era, either in kingdom or temple. As we reach the age of those prophets whose writings have come down to us, from Micah and Isaiah to Jeremiah, the progressive change for evil becomes more and more painfully apparent, and the colossal heathen powers of Assyria and Babylon are seen gradually approaching until they destroy the last outward semblance of the Hebrew State, even to the throne of David itself.

During all this period the prophets were obliged to contend with a spiritual peril which was peculiar to that age. The belief of those times did not deny the existence of Jehovah, but rather tended to merge him into a mere local deity, and one who had practically proved himself

¹ 1 Sam. ix. 9.

inferior in power to the gods of Mesopotamia. It is difficult for us now to understand what was the popular theology then, because we read only the strong, high monotheism of the prophets themselves, which has since become our own; but the whole ancient world, down to the latest Roman age, never raised the gods above the arbitrament of the sword. It was universally conceded that their failure or impotence was the cause of the conquest of the cities or countries which worshipped them. "Hath any of the gods of the nations delivered them out of mine hand, that Jehovah should deliver Jerusalem?" was the question of the Assyrian officer, who undoubtedly believed in the existence of them all as gods, Jehovah included.¹ As Sennacherib and Nebuchadnezzar in turn ravaged and massacred, and the horrible evils of Asiatic conquest were constantly before the eyes of the people, they became utterly demoralized by fear and despair, and inclined to propitiate the mighty gods of the heathen. Thus to the devout of that generation came the double bitterness not only of national ruin, but also of national apostasy to that dreadful Shemitic idolatry, the cruel and licentious rites of which shocked even the Greeks and Romans, as they saw it in Babylon and Carthage.

In the midst of so much disaster, and such degeneration, it was quite natural for all patriotic and devoted hearts to turn back in thought regretfully to the days of the great king who had made the names of Zion and Jerusalem imperishable, and whose heroic qualities, both body and mind, especially enlisted for him the pride and affection of his race. It was David who first lifted the nation to the headship of Western Asia after its prolonged subjection to the surrounding peoples, and at the close of his reign all the promises of Moses seemed ful-

¹ 2 Kings xviii. 35.

filled. The people had rest from their enemies on every side, and the sway of Israel was recognized from the Euphrates to the sea.

It has been urged by some that here we have a sufficient explanation for the rise and development of the Messianic idea. What could be more natural and likely to happen, it is said, than that the hope for another David, who would reunite and restore the kingdom, first expressed only in the form of a poetic aspiration, should become gradually changed into a fixed belief that this was the promise and covenant of God? Every fresh calamity, from within or from without, only served to make the longing more intense and specific, until not a prophet arose who did not lighten the gloom of his burden by some new word of hope in regard to this one remaining Consolation of Israel.

There can be no objection to allowing the fullest force to this hypothesis that the origin of the idea of a Coming One was through the operation of natural causes. The dreams of a people like the Hebrews in the ninth and eighth centuries B. C. are as easy to predicate as the wishes of children. The wisest child is yet never other than a child in his desires, whatever he may be in other respects, and the ablest man of old Judah and Jerusalem would not appreciably outgrow the chosen ideals characteristic of his time and place in history. According to ordinary human principles, a defeated nation would inevitably long for a David who should be all victorious over the detested invader. A wasted kingdom would beget hopes for a greater than Solomon in prosperity, and the spirit of piety would find its highest satisfaction in picturing a king mighty in the suppression of false worship, and in the deliverance of his people from the rule of the heathen. If, therefore, the Messiah of the Hebrew prophets occurred

thus naturally to their minds as a creation of their aspirations, it follows as naturally that he must belong in moral and intellectual stature to the age of the prophets. Their Son of David must be David over again, amplified and exaggerated perhaps, yet still an Oriental king, great according to the ideal of kingship in the times before the Captivity.

Could this be demonstrated, could the Coming One of their writings be shown to be only the hero of Hebrew song, then all Christian argument from the Prophets is as much out of place as from Homer. But the truth is that the whole strength of the appeal to the Prophets lies in the profound contrast between their ideal of the Messiah and all other known "natural" ideals, ancient or modern. It is not that they all foretell the advent of the king which constitutes their evidence. No mistake can be greater than this. It is the kind of king whom they all alike portray, which shows what manner of spirit they were of, and who alone it was who fulfilled their Scriptures.

These facts are well illustrated in the writings of Micah, who belonged to the age of the fullest development of Hebrew prophecy, just preceding and following the reign of Hezekiah. He had for contemporaries Amos, Hosea, and Isaiah, and composed his prophecies at various dates between 758 and 722 B.C. It should always be borne in mind that the prophetic writings were never intended as formal treatises or essays, but were detached poetical compositions, suggested primarily by the events of the times. In many cases, therefore, the particular allusions of the prophet, perfectly clear to his contemporaries, have become, by the lapse of twenty-five centuries, obscure to us, owing to the loss of all except the most fragmentary record of the events commemorated. This can be readily

understood if we imagine a modern lyric on some historical episode of our own times read by some Chinaman or Japanese, wholly ignorant of the events spoken of. Often some of its most effective passages or turns of expression would be well-nigh unintelligible without the commentary, which the poet himself, of course, would not think of supplying. When we add to these considerations the essentially figurative style of all poetry—and none more so than the Oriental imagery of the Bible—we cannot wonder that many readers find these portions of the Bible difficult to understand.

Another cause of obscurity proceeds from the modern division into chapters and verses, which in numerous instances breaks the continuity of some of the most beautiful and important passages of the Bible, and by so much interferes with their proper appreciation. Yet, with all these drawbacks, it is rare that the real meaning of the author cannot be shown clearly enough to leave but little room for conjectural interpretation.

It is in connection with the great prophecy which begins with the third, and ends with the fifth, chapter, that Micah gives us his Messianic message. At the time this was written, about two hundred and fifty years after David's death, the decline of the nation was rapidly approaching. The minds of the people changed with every new turn of political affairs, so that each successive king found it easy to lead them in any direction in matters concerning religion. A monarch well disposed towards pagan worship, like Ahaz, found no difficulty in erecting an Assyrian altar in the very Temple of Jehovah. His successor, Hezekiah, as easily put down every form of idolatry, and in his turn he was succeeded by his murderous apostate son.

In an age like this, of abounding hypocrisy, all sense of morals, or of rights, social, civil, or religious, became al-

most entirely lost. To denounce the wicked, in those days, exposed the faithful prophet to an enmity which knew no mercy. Therefore it was with a perfect understanding of what might await him, should a Manasseh ascend the throne, that Micah uttered the words which form the introduction to the memorable Messianic prophecy which follows immediately upon them.

“Hear this, I pray you, ye heads of the house of Jacob, and princes of the house of Israel, that abhor judgment, and pervert all equity. They build up Zion with blood, and Jerusalem with iniquity. The heads thereof judge for reward, and the priests thereof teach for hire, and the prophets thereof divine for money: yet will they lean upon the Lord, and say, Is not the Lord among us? none evil can come upon us. Therefore, shall Zion for your sake be ploughed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house [Temple] as the high places of the forest.”¹

To appreciate the courage which dictated these words, we must remember that his contemporaries did not receive them merely as words. All superstitious people have a singular fear of prophets, believing that their foretelling of events in some way brings them about. The resentment encountered by God’s messengers on this account was far greater than that engendered by mere dislike of, or disbelief in, their warnings, and frequently led to their death. Micah, indeed, seems to have been protected by the devout Hezekiah, for his escape from a violent death by reason of this prophecy was cited in favor of Jeremiah, about one hundred and fifty years later, when priests and people wished to kill him, as Jehoiakim had killed his fellow-prophet Urijah, for a similar prediction.²

Having thus seen, in prophetic vision, the royal city of

¹ Micah iii. 9-12.

² Jer. xxvi. 16-23.

David, its palaces levelled to the ground, and ploughed as a field, Jerusalem in ruins, and the Sacred Mountain of the Temple of Jehovah no longer thronged by thousands of worshippers coming up from every part of the land, but lonely and deserted as the wild wooded peaks of Hermon, the prophet turns to another and a more distant scene, where every feature is made to appear in most striking contrast to the first.

“But in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it. And many nations shall come, and say, Come let us go up to the Mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig-tree; and none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of the Lord of Hosts hath spoken it.”¹

What a dream for any age, not excepting our own! In Micah's day war was the only royal or national glory, and war in the spirit and fashion of that long line of Assyrian kings who themselves tell of the furnaces which they made into which to cast the children of the conquered, and picture the besieged towns encircled with impaled men and women. How truly afar off this vision lay will also appear from the fact that this prophecy may have been written in the very year when, according to legend, the

¹ Micah iv. 1-4.

wolf-suckled king was laying at Rome the foundations of the most perfected and typical war-power the world has ever known.

To the prophet's own contemporaries, however, the most visionary portion of this passage was, doubtless, that which foretold the extension of the worship of Jehovah to all nations. To appreciate this, we must be true to history, and avoid the common error of reading into the sentiments and conceptions of an age long past those which belong only to our own.

A universal God was utterly inconceivable at that time to the world at large. Jehovah, the one Father of all mankind, as he is worshipped by us, was almost unknown as such, even by most Hebrews. They regarded him instead as their own peculiar and territorial divinity. The great Dispersion had not yet occurred. That calamity first familiarized them with the thought that their Jehovah might be everywhere. At the time of which we speak, each man believed, rather, as Micah himself expresses it: "For all people will walk every one in the name of his god, and we will walk in the name of the Lord our God."¹ With this limitation ever in their minds, came also the enfeebling sense of being in a hopeless minority in the world, which always acts as a discouragement. We see this even now, among some Christians.

Furthermore, at no time did Jehovah lend himself, so to speak, to human pride. Other races might glory in their descent from the gods, but the Hebrew was constantly reminded that originally he was but "a Syrian ready to perish," then a bondman in Egypt, and that he now belonged to an obscure land which the world for ages overlooked in ignorance or contempt. With such a

¹ Micah iv. 5.

record, the worldlings of Jerusalem might naturally answer, in their hearts at least, to the message of the prophet, Would that Jehovah would show his greatness in something more potent than prophecy.

The faith, therefore, was strong indeed which asserted the coming wonder of history, that the Jehovah who had only Zion for his dwelling-place was to become the God of all the peoples of the stranger. The picture of his long-deserted Moriah transformed into the highest sacred mount on earth, with many far distant nations interchanging loving invitation to go up together to its shrine, was the fine poetic imagery of the advent of universal brotherhood. Pilgrimages were almost the only peaceful journeys of ancient times, and it was at sacred places alone that strangers could meet in peace.

But how much more than a mere national aspiration is contained in these beautiful words! We have said that men, like the Hebrew prophets, are difficult to account for on ordinary principles. In an age when to be a stranger was synonymous with being an enemy, and at the time when the Assyrian was destroying the land, the prophet beholds his Jehovah, blessing all the strangers of the earth with peace and good-will. It is not patriotic pride which dictates the verse, "For the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem."¹ The tenor of the whole passage is that of a modern foreign missionary discourse, pure and simple, and not after the manner of a natural man who had been stirred by Rab-shekah's blasphemy, and who lived in terror of the heathen's sword, hoping also that some day the Hebrew's turn for vengeance upon his foes would come.

Naught but the highest blessing is in store for the foreigners through their instruction in the ways of the

God of Jacob. To this day in Palestine the fields and vineyards are deserted at night, and no one ventures to live in a detached farm-house; but at that future time every man will be as secure under the vine and fig-tree as within the walled city. And all this prosperity is to belong to the stranger, just as if he were no alien to the Commonwealth of Israel. Where can a sentiment like this be found elsewhere among the most generous of human utterances!

Also, it is not, neither has it ever been, natural for men to give up the attractions of war. Military pride is the besetting temptation of all patriotic feeling, because success in arms is still regarded as the highest test of national character. The foremost minds in our day recognize clearly the profound truthfulness of these ancient words, but we are still far from this spirit of the prophets. The modern condemnation of war, frequent as it is becoming, has a hollow ring to it, in view of the popular welcome to the victorious general. Micah is still an anachronism in the nineteenth century.

“When a prophet speaketh in the name of the Lord, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord hath not spoken,” were the words of Moses.¹ How does Micah stand this test?

It must surely be admitted that in simple literalness of fulfilment events enough have occurred to render this prediction difficult to be accounted for by those who deny its divine inspiration. According to “natural” principles, there is nothing more extraordinary than the mighty change in the worship of the world, wrought by that small and apparently dying nation to whom Micah addressed these words. Judah and Jerusalem were surrounded by kindred Shemitic tribes who each

¹ Deut. xviii. 22.

worshipped its own particular deities. Why should Jehovah survive Chemosh and Remphan, and become, without exception, the God of the greatest peoples of the earth?

But even this is a minor marvel compared with the moral transformation which still further illustrates this wonderful utterance. The whole spirit of the nations had undergone a change through the influence proceeding from the message preached as the word of Jehovah unto them "beginning from Jerusalem."¹

The vast armaments of our times on land and sea, and the patient skill with which the art of war is being perfected, deludes some into the belief that wars are never to cease, but juster observation of the signs of the times unmistakably points to the complete fulfilment of the prophecy at no very remote date. No one revolution in the world of opinion has been greater than that indicated in this respect by many facts of this present age. The powers best equipped for war are those which now protest that they love war no more, and arm only for the purpose of avoiding it. Every muster for battle is preceded by solemn official disclaimers of breaking the peace, from both sides. Is not this a testimony to something which "rebukes" the strong nations afar off? It is easy to see that, in the rapidly increasing burdens created by modern scientific armaments, the age is nearing a general revolt against this method of insuring peace, and that the marvellous increase of communication need only to continue to effect in the future as great changes as have already taken place during the last generation to render wars impossible. Owing to these causes, long before another American Centennial every nation in Christendom will have sent its soldiers permanently back to the forge and to the field.

¹ Luke xxiv. 47.

Had the prophet stopped here, the natural inference would be that his own people were to be cast off until, after a long period, in which Jerusalem should be in ruins and the Temple Mount be deserted, as a testimony against their sin, other foreign peoples would take their place as worshippers of Jehovah. The rest of the prophecy, however, to the end of the fifth chapter, is a splendid and powerful ode, devoted to the unfolding of the divine design in the destiny of the Covenant People, and its inseparable connection with the coming Son of David.

Here the prophet's thoroughly dramatic style, with its sudden transitions, as if he were looking on picture after picture as it passed before him, causes the whole piece to rank with the finest poetical compositions in any literature, but unfortunately, not to mention several unhappy translations, our chapter and verse division, made usually without the slightest reference to the poetical cast of the sentences, almost wholly disguises its scenic character, and thus causes entire sentences to become practically unintelligible to most readers. We may be sure that Shakespeare's best passages would fare no better if similarly treated. But, when the whole context is taken together, it will be found to foretell graphically and yet definitely some of the most remarkable facts of human history as they occur in the unique story of Israel.

The section which refers to his own people begins directly after the formula usually employed to denote the close of a special prophecy, "For the mouth of the Lord of Hosts hath spoken it." It should be read as the passionate exclamation of a true Israelite in answer to the immediately preceding words of the foreign people going up to the Mount. The idea being, "But, oh, Jehovah is *our* God!" Occurring in this connection, the sense evidently is that the Gentiles had no right to Jehovah, each

possessing his own deities. If they are at last to receive him, as has just been announced, it must not be forgotten that Jehovah is first and for ever and ever our God! This is an exceedingly beautiful key-note, as it may be termed, to the whole passage which follows: For "in that day," that is, the day of complete Gentile conversion, God will also remember his forsaken and afflicted people, halting for so long while the world passed on, and he shall restore them to himself forever. Then: "O, tower of the flock, unto thee shall it come, even the first dominion." Here all interpreters are agreed that by the Flock Tower is meant the dynasty of David, or, in the paraphrase of the ancient Chaldee Targum, the Messiah, who from the shepherd's tower watches over the whole flock.

But now another scene appears in view, a scene of anguish and complete national overthrow. It is the sad beginning of the vision of David's City ploughed as a field, and Jerusalem in ruins, Zion without king or counsellor driven out into the world, sent to Babylon, there not to perish, but to accomplish her delivery. Now the prophet sees the ancient enemies of her name, like the children of Edom, who, in the day of Jerusalem, said, "Raze it, raze it, even to the foundation thereof," gathering to rejoice over her humiliation and ruin.¹

But they know not the thoughts of the Lord, neither understand they his counsel in that going to Babylon! For a moment the prophet's eye kindles as he catches a glimpse of the momentous results of the captivity to the entire world. Then is Zion's true power to be seen, in crushing all paganism to the dust, and consecrating her conquests to the God of the whole earth.² Immediately after this he returns to the original theme. He sees the city encompassed by troops of enemies. The siege pro-

¹ Psalms cxxxvii. 7.

² Micah iv. 4-13.

gresses. The Majesty of Israel is struck down! Where is the Sceptre of Judah and the Law-giver now? Turn and look towards little Bethlehem! Not from the palaces of the City of David the King, but from the humble Village of David the Shepherd, is to come the Ruler, who, though born there on earth, yet in existence is of old, from everlasting!¹

Even when the Bethlehem-born Ruler comes, however, the whole counsel of God in the casting-out of his chosen people will not be accomplished. They are yet to be given up, until the whole flock of Israel are united.² Meantime, the Shepherd of Bethlehem shall feed his flock in the strength and majesty of Jehovah, a flock which shall abide. The Shepherd shall be great to the ends of the earth. It is he who shall be the cause of survival from the Assyrian—the great type of the enemies of Israel throughout the ages—against whom, and the land of Nimrod—the traditional land of revolt against God from the time of Babel—defenders enough, and more than enough, for their overthrow shall be raised.³ Then the Dispersion of Israel among many nations shall act upon the world according to the original counsel of God, either as the glad dew and fertilizing rain which only God can send, or as the resistless power against which no foe can prevail. The vision closes with a sight of Israel wholly redeemed from pride and worldliness—symbolized by the keeping of horses and chariots, which were forbidden by Moses, even to kings—and from all participation in idolatry, after which every one of their enemies shall be destroyed.⁴

¹ Micah v. 1, 2.

² John x. 16.

³ The metaphor “seven shepherds and eight principal men,” that is, leaders, is an Eastern expression meaning enough and more, because as the mystic number seven denotes completion in its highest sense, so one more, or eight, implies excess of need.

⁴ Micah v. 4–15.

However interpreters may differ about details in the exposition of this prophecy, there can be no doubt that its main purport and design was to reassure the devout among the nation in the approaching sore trial of their faith. No people before had been known to survive the awful ordeal of captivity, and Judah certainly had no reason to expect a national resurrection, when Ephraim and the tribes with him were so lost after their removal that but a few individuals afterwards mingled with their brethren in Babylon. It is true that the old prophecy promised continued political existence in foretelling that Judah should not be without sceptre or lawgiver until Shiloh come, and that later Nathan, the man of God, solemnly assured David that his house should stand for ever and ever. It may have been some reliance on these oracles which Micah rebuked in the first part of his prophecy.¹

Still, the capture of the city, the destruction of the Temple, the dethronement of the Davidic line, and the carrying away of the nation itself unto Babylon, could not but seem to human eyes as the utter failure of Jehovah's care for his people and for his word. There is, therefore, all through this passage, a plain reference, in the choice of terms, to both these ancient prophecies. "Is there no king in thee—no counsellor now? The Judge of Israel is smitten." These sentences, and the mention of Bethlehem, clearly imply that God had those former promises still in mind. A Bethlehem-born Prince would be more surely Davidic than one born in Jerusalem, for in capital cities dynasty may supplant dynasty, but no such changes occur in the family settlements of small Palestine villages. It is on this account that God had a great counsel in allowing this terrible calamity of the Captivity. By its

¹ Micah iii. 5.

means, the remnant of Jacob, scattered among many nations, should profoundly affect the whole world. Such considerations would undoubtedly do much towards consoling and sustaining the faithful in the coming evil times, and would lead them to cling all the more fondly to this new assurance of a Son to David.

It is superfluous to our present purpose to notice at much length the objection of some critics that Micah could not have written this prophecy, because Nineveh, and not Babylon, was the conquering city of his age, and, if he predicted a captivity at all, it would be under the Assyrians, and not under the Babylonians. It matters little in the argument whether it was written by Micah, or one hundred and fifty years later by Jeremiah, or some contemporary. In either case, it would still remain a remarkable prophecy. Who could have foreseen at all, much less in just the fashion in which it afterwards came to pass, that the captivity of that insignificant nation would be an event of such unequalled importance in the history of the world? As we have already remarked, the two great destroyers of idolatry, Christianity and Islam, humanly speaking, would never have gained a foothold among the nations, but for the long preparation for their advent caused by the dispersion of the Jews in the Greek and Roman countries on the one hand, and in Arabia on the other.

The fact is, however, that Babylon was already coming to the front in Micah's time as the political successor of Nineveh, as she had been for ages the source of civilization and knowledge to the Assyrians, which their great libraries, now accessible to us, abundantly show. Esarhad-don, the son of Sennacherib, was already holding his court at this time at Babylon instead of at Nineveh. This latter city, indeed, fell before the Babylonians and the Medes

only about one hundred years after the probable date of the composition of Micah's prophecy.

But small enough was the people which forms the subject of this prophecy at any time for centuries thereafter. As compared with the greatness of the Babylonian, Persian, or Macedonian, it was as little thought of and written about as is some obscure sect in British India now. It was not till after the Maccabean period—that is, after the whole of the Old Testament had been completed and translated into Greek—that Israel would again be known as a nation or power of any kind.¹ It happens then, that whoever wrote this passage, whether Micah or not, either foresaw as a prophet, or by a most strange coincidence wrote as a man, that the Babylonian captivity would not destroy the Jews, but rather cause them to live for many centuries among many nations whom they should convert from idolatry. Nor was this all. That One born in Bethlehem should become great in the earth as the Shepherd of the World; and furthermore, that he should be believed in as pre-existing from everlasting!

To escape the obvious application of this last feature of the prophecy to him whom millions of Gentiles now believe in and worship as the eternal Son of God, it is alleged that the words signify only that his birth in Bethlehem and his subsequent career were predetermined in the everlasting counsels of God. But this is the case with the birth and career of every son and daughter of

¹ The contemptuous allusion of Tacitus to the glorious struggle of the Maccabees shows that this writer despised the Jews so much as to betray him into a complete instance of want of accuracy wholly unusual in him. "During the dominion of the Assyrians, the Medes, and the Persians, the Jews," he says, "were the most abject of their dependent subjects. After the Macedonians obtained the supremacy of the east, King Antiochus endeavored to do away with their superstition, and introduce Greek habits, but was hindered by a Parthian war from reforming a most repulsive people!"—Tac. Hist. v. 8.

the human race, and to suppose that the prophet meant to state in such august phrase, as a distinction, that which, on this interpretation, is no distinction at all is preposterous. With candid minds it is difficult in this argument constantly to escape the interpretation of prophecy by history. It will have its weight. If Micah had no thought of foretelling the wonderful historical fact that the Majesty of Bethlehem would be worshipped in the world as an Eternal Being, all we can say is that he comes strangely near to it when he says, in his characteristic dramatic style, "Whose goings forth from of old! from everlasting!"

The mention of Bethlehem as the birthplace of the Messiah could not fail to suggest a coming in lowliness of condition and repute. Each feature in the previous utterances intimates more and more clearly the failing fortunes of David's line until it should sink back to its original humble estate. We find that this is the uniform note in all the predictions of the Messiah. He appears nowhere as among the mighty ones of earth, and all the passages which seem to imply that he shall use the sword prove, on examination, only an exemplification of his own words when he speaks of coming to send a sword into the earth. He has been the greatest cause of both peace and war in history, just as in this prophecy Israel is represented as the gentle dew and the destroying lion.

When Micah prophesies that Zion shall beat in pieces many people and consecrate their wealth to the Lord of the whole earth, it is evident that no political enslavement can be meant, for just before he represents the nations as learning the ways of Zion's God, and, therefore, abandoning the sword. So again the prophet cannot mean that the Messiah's fifteen generals would not only save Zion's palaces from the Assyrian invader, but ravage Mesopotamia in return, in the face of his previous solemn

declaration that the invader should drive his plough over the site of those same palaces, and that Zion herself would be carried away captive.¹ The contradiction of vindictive warfare to the tenor of the whole prophecy, which is a blessing to the Gentiles, is too palpable to allow of such an explanation. The primary conception of the Messiah's office is the peaceful one of the shepherd, and the enemy is destroyed only according to the counsel of God, not by the Messiah's right arm.

Micah's great contemporary, Isaiah, quotes the whole of the beautiful passage of the conversion.² There can be little doubt that the two prophets were near friends. They lived at the same court, and are much alike in their hatred of hypocrisy, and in discernment of the Messiah. It would be natural, therefore, for one to quote from the other's message, and thus second it. That the original author of this passage is Micah appears clearly from the fact that it forms an integral and inseparable part of the whole composition, while in Isaiah it stands isolated, like an extract used as a general motto for the extended passage which follows.

¹ Micah v. 5.

² Isaiah ii. 2-4.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE MESSIANIC PROPHECIES OF ISAIAH.

WE have already had occasion to note, in the case of the prophecies of Micah, the extent to which the assurance of the permanence of the kingdom of David was the stay of the ancient people of God. Many of the most important passages, also, in the writings of Micah's great colleague, Isaiah, can hardly be understood without keeping in view the constant mental reference to this abiding hope of Israel. It is well, therefore, before we go further, to trace back the historic beginning, as it may be termed, of this identification of David and his line with the coming of the Messiah.

For many centuries the people clung to this promise with a longing which disappointment and disaster, captivity and dispersion, only made stronger. At the birth of Christ the whole world was wrought up to a high degree of expectation, on account of the universally known anticipation of the Jewish people that their Son of David would soon appear to set up his kingdom in the earth. Regarded only in an historic sense, the consequences of the prevalence of this idea were most momentous for mankind, because, on the one hand, the Christian Apostles found multitudes of Gentiles everywhere, ready to hail their message of Christ's advent, while, on the other, the hopeless insurrections of the Jews against the Romans were prompted in great measure by their mistaken hopes of Messianic succor.

In the seventh chapter of 2d Samuel we have a full

statement of its origin in a revelation from God, made to David through the prophet Nathan. We are told that, after David had become fully established upon his throne, he expressed his intention of building a temple for the reception of the Ark of God. Nathan cordially approved of the design, but a vision came to him in the night directing him to go and tell David that the accomplishment of this pious work was to be left to his son. In consequence of David's devotion, however, God promised to grant him a divinely established house or dynasty, which should never be forsaken, nor put aside like that of his predecessor Saul. His kingdom should be established forever. This promise, that David's kingdom was never to come to an end, but that his throne should be everlasting, is the central idea of the whole passage. It occurs six times, directly or by reference, in the answering prayer of David himself.

There is no mention, it is true, of any one person who is to be the fulfilment of this prophecy. Its terms are applicable rather to the family or dynasty as such, for it is stated that, should the reigning king at any time do evil, he should be chastened, as human fathers chasten their children, but the line should not be cut off by Divine decree. Nevertheless, a throne that shall be established forever is so contrary to the great law of change which governs all things human, that David speaks of it with astonishment. Doubtless this marked and emphasized feature of the promise was always suggestive of more than ordinary human causes for such perpetuity.

How every devoted heart among the people afterwards held fast to this pledge of the continuance of the nation with its king is well illustrated by the 89th Psalm, written in Babylon. The author recounts with pathetic fulness the specific and solemn promise of God to David: "My

covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips. Once have I sworn by my holiness that I will not lie unto David. His seed shall endure forever, and his throne as the sun before me. It shall be established forever as the moon, and as a faithful witness in heaven.”¹ The Psalmist then expostulates with Jehovah, in that he had abandoned David and cast his throne down to the ground. Nevertheless, he plainly refers to a representative of David as then existing, though uncrowned, for the psalm closes with the prayer that God would soon remember his oath and be moved at the humiliation of his anointed.

The restoration of the kingdom to the House of David, after a long period of decline was so often specifically foretold by the earlier prophets that we can well understand the significance of this Psalm of the Captivity. Thus Amos, who preceded both Micah and Isaiah, closes his prophecy in the picturesque style of his calling of a herdsman and shepherd, with the words, “In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old.”² The reference of the figure here is to those enclosures for the flocks and their attendants in the wilder parts of Palestine, which consist of rough walls with tented roofs, and which are left for a time by the departure of the flock to other pastures in the summer, to be again repaired for use with their return in winter. Such would be, for many days, the neglect and desertion of the shepherd-fold of David, during which Israel would wander far from its place and shelter.

The same idea is also expressed by a contemporary of Amos, the prophet Hosea, though in his case the reference

¹ Psa. lxxxix. 34-37.

² Amos ix. 11.

is more restricted to the restoration of the seceding ten tribes of Israel to their proper allegiance to the dynasty of David. "For the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim. Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their king; and shall fear the Lord and his goodness in the latter days."¹ Here the return of apostate Israel to the worship of Jehovah is linked with their return to the service of David as king; and, in a wide sense, this ancient oracle applies to the whole people who have borne that name, and who have been wanderers in the world for so many centuries, without king, or temple, or sacrifice, because they still reject the Son of David, who alone can restore them to their former relation to God. Hosea, however, was sent to the rebellious kingdom of Ephraim, and his words, therefore, refer primarily to that, now long extinct, branch of Israel. Nevertheless, this prophecy clearly shows how the prophets always associate the abiding throne of David, not with a continued political sway, but with the observance of true religion.

As the fated Captivity not only drew near, but came at last with the overthrow of all semblance of Davidic royalty, the prophets of that period, Jeremiah and Ezekiel, reiterated the Messianic return of David's line with constantly increasing emphasis. We need only quote for illustration the following passages: "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth."² This same promise is repeated in almost the same words in chapter xxxiii. 14-16, with the further assurance, "For thus saith

¹ Hos. iii. 4, 5.

² Jer. xxiii. 5.

the Lord ; David shall never want a man to sit upon the throne of the house of Israel ; neither shall the priests the Levites want a man before me to offer burnt-offerings, and to kindle meat-offerings, and to do sacrifice continually.”¹ The rest of this chapter is taken up with a prophecy against the unbelievers who would see in the Captivity the ruin not only of the dynasty of David, but also of the ordinances and worship of Jehovah as these were then represented by the Levitical priesthood. The prophet is, therefore, directed solemnly to affirm that neither the one nor the other would ever come to an end. That Jeremiah’s words do not refer to the outward symbols of each, namely, to a king sitting on an earthly throne in Jerusalem, and to a Levite priest offering sacrifices in Solomon’s temple, is plain from his oft-repeated predictions that Nebuchadnezzar would soon destroy both the kingdom and the temple. The Captivity, therefore, was to be a seeming interruption only of the eternal sway of David’s line. A return of its rule is constantly promised as inseparable from the fact of restoration to God, as in the words, “But they shall serve the Lord their God, and David their king, whom I will raise up to them.”²

In a similar strain Ezekiel, in a passage on the ruin of Israel by the unfaithfulness and wrong guidance of its shepherds, promises that with the final restoration God would “set up one Shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David ; he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd. And I the Lord will be their God, and my servant David a prince among them ; I the Lord have spoken it.”³ Thus was the Dispersion finally to end, according to Ezekiel, in the return of the Davidic kingdom. “And David my servant shall be king over them ; and they shall all have one shepherd : they shall

¹ Jer. xxxiii. 17, 18.

² Jer. xxx. 9.

³ Ezek. xxxiv. 23, 24.

also walk in my judgments, and observe my statutes, and do them : and my servant David shall be their prince forever.”¹

The return of the Jews from Babylon to rebuild the Temple, according to the permission of Cyrus, took place under the leadership of a prince of the house of David, Zerubbabel ; and it is evident, from the references of Zechariah to this subject, that the prophets of that day centred their hopes upon a continuance of the Davidic rule in some form, even if not in an outwardly regal one.

By the time of the Maccabees the family of David had declined into such insignificance that no reference to its existence occurs in any extant writing of the period. Even in the deadly struggle with Antiochus, when both religious and patriotic fervor were so fully aroused, no one seemed to think of raising the standard of the royal name ; and when independence was finally won, the headship of the nation passed over to the Asmonean family of the Maccabees, though at first it did not assume the title of King of Judah, but that of High-priest.

This disappearance of the Davidic family from history, however, is no evidence of its extinction, or that its existence was unknown. History repeatedly records the survival in humble position of ancient royal families, especially in the East. At the present day, the lineal descendants of the once famous Arab dynasty of Ayoub, to which the chivalrous Saladin belonged, are to be found as peasants in a village in Northern Lebanon, perfectly well known as of royal blood, and too proud, on that account, to intermarry with any other family.² Moreover, consider-

¹ Ezek. xxxvii. 24, 25.

² “ In our own history, the glory of the once illustrious Plantagenets so completely waned that the direct representative of Margaret Plantagenet,

ing the tenacity which characterized the Jews in preserving lines of descent, a trait which they share in common with the Arabs and other races of the Shemitic stock, and also the extreme importance attached to family relationship in Eastern life, it is to the last degree improbable that any one in the time of Christ could claim to belong to the Davidic family, with any hope of credence, without actually belonging to it. That the title of the Son of David, which was applied to Jesus, was not disputed by his contemporaries, is strong evidence of the truth of his claim, and in fact his Davidic extraction is unwillingly admitted in the Talmud.

The decline of the dynasty, indeed, even to its apparent disappearance from the world, is as constantly implied in the predictions of the prophets, as are its revival and eternal duration under the Messiah. In both these respects Jesus fulfils the requirements of prophecy as can no other. We see this whenever interpreters endeavor to justify the application of this element of Messianic prophecy to some historic monarch of the Davidic line. The endless duration of the *rule* of any human king is a flight of rhetoric of which not even Oriental adulation has been capable, however eternal in *name* or *fame* he is described to be. When the idea of a Messiah's kingdom is examined, it is found to include far more than would be possible to the longest reign of any earthly potentate, but in Jesus, as Son of David and Son of God, the historic and prophetic ideals are fully harmonized.

daughter and heiress of George, Duke of Clarence, followed the trade of a cobbler in Newport, Shropshire, in 1637. Among the lineal descendants of Edmund of Woodstock, sixth son of Edward I., and entitled to quarter the royal arms, were a village butcher and a keeper of a turnpike gate, and among the descendants of Thomas Plantagenet, Duke of Gloucester, fifth son of Edward III., was included the late sexton of a London church.—Burke's "Anecdotes of the Peerage," cited in Geikie's "Life of Christ," p. 104.

1. *The Prophecy of Chapters Seven to Nine.*

It is probable that Isaiah exercised the functions of a prophet for the long period of sixty years, beginning before the death of Uzziah, through the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, and ending with the bloody reign of Manasseh. This monarch is charged with the death of the aged prophet, by commanding him to be sawn asunder. An apparent reference to this martyrdom occurs in the New Testament.¹ According to the uniform tradition of the Jews, Isaiah belonged to the family of David, his father, Amoz, being uncle to King Uzziah. There is no reason to dispute this, as it is difficult otherwise to account for there being no other instance of a prophet of royal blood to suggest the circumstance in this case.

The earliest prophecy of Isaiah which bears directly upon our subject begins with the seventh chapter, continues through the eighth, and closes with verse seven of the ninth. Unfortunately, the chapter divisions in this book interrupt the connection of the passages oftener, if possible, than in any other of the Old Testament. Notwithstanding this, we shall find on investigation that the subject of the seventh and eighth chapters is identical, and that the first seven verses of the ninth are but the culmination of that which precedes them.

This prophecy is so intimately connected with the historic events which occasioned it, that a brief review of these is necessary. We possess now, also, the remarkable advantage of reference to a minute account of the reign and conquests of Tiglath Pileser II., written by himself, which contains much information not given in the condensed narratives of the Bible, but which nevertheless illustrate these latter in a most striking manner.

¹ Heb. xi. 37.

From the histories of the Books of Kings and Chronicles we gather that Uzziah, or, as he is named both in Kings and by Tiglath Pileser, Azariah, was an able and warlike monarch. During his long reign Judah seems to have prospered beyond its neighbors. We learn, however, for the first time from Tiglath Pileser, that Uzziah was the head of a great confederacy of the states of Palestine and Syria, quite to the borders of Armenia, which was formed to resist the dangerous growth of the Assyrian power. Tiglath Pileser claims to have won the victory in a great battle at Hamath, when that city and the city of Calno fell into his hands. As the Assyrian does not mention that Uzziah fled from the battle-field, as he uniformly does in the case of other defeated kings, it is doubtful whether he gained advantage over Judah at that time.

At the end of this campaign, at a court which he held, Tiglath Pileser received the submission of a number of kings of Syria and Palestine in person. Among the names he mentions are those of Rezin of Damascus, Solomon, King of Moab, Menahem, King of Samaria, and Hiram, King of Tyre, a name which seems to have been common with the Tyrian kings, but not that of Uzziah.

After his return to Nineveh, Tiglath Pileser appears to have been mainly occupied for many years with conquests to the south and east of Assyria, and in Armenia on the north. The next time he appears in Syria, he comes with a great army, at the solicitation of Yahuhazi, Ahaz, King of Judah. It is now evident that the uninterrupted successes of the Assyrians in this campaign were largely due to the divided state of the country, of which Tiglath Pileser was quick to take advantage.

On the death of Uzziah, after the short reign of his son, Jotham, Ahaz, a young and weak prince, ascended the

throne of Judah. He soon found himself attacked simultaneously by the very confederacy against Assyria which his grandfather, Uzziah, had formerly headed. This was now composed of Damascus and Samaria on the north, the Edomites, Moabites, and Arabs on the east, and the Philistines on the south. It is probable that some leaning towards Assyria had been already shown by Ahaz, which was the cause of this sudden inroad into his dominions. The throne of Samaria was at that time occupied by an usurper, Pekah, the son of Remaliah, who had killed the son and successor of Menahem. We are told in the Book of Chronicles that this Pekah destroyed one hundred and twenty thousand of the men of Judah in one battle, and carried off two hundred thousand captives from Ahaz. From Isaiah we learn that the object of the confederacy was to dethrone the dynasty of David, and to set up a chief, called the son of Tabeal, in its stead. There are indications, also, in his writings, that a considerable party of traitors to the royal dynasty existed in Jerusalem itself.¹

Tiglath Pileser completely defeated this confederacy, and ostentatiously set about punishing in turn all the enemies of his protégé Ahaz. While he was laying siege to Damascus, he devastated all Galilee and the east of Jordan, Ammon, Moab, Edom and Philistia, and the Arabs, until finally he took Damascus and put its king, Rezin, to death. This was all good Assyrian policy. It left only Judah standing for future disposal.

While reading the Assyrian's boastful narrative, we feel strangely. We seem to be hearing the echo of the voice of Isaiah, coming to us from another quarter, one which has been silent for ages. At that time who could have thought that the memory of the prophet of Zion would

¹ Isa. viii. 6.

survive that of the monarch of Nineveh? The Assyrian possessed one of the largest and most magnificent capitals ever seen in the world. There is no reason to doubt the accuracy of his statements as a whole, for they are too detailed and too circumstantial to be grossly fictitious. If this be the case, no battles of modern Europe equalled some of his in the slaughter by which they were attended, nor is there now any potentate whose power, relatively to that of others, would compare with his in his day. Who could have guessed then that he was to pass away so utterly that for two thousand five hundred years his very name would be known only by a single reference to it in the Bible, and that his record should be at last unearthed by distant peoples, more interested in information concerning Isaiah and Micah, and Judah and Jerusalem, than in all the kings of Nineveh combined? Yet the statesmen of that day had every reason to believe that Zion's king had no other support than that of Tiglath Pileser, and that, but for him, the son of David would have been forever destroyed by the son of Tabeal!

Turning from the writing of Tiglath Pileser to that of Isaiah, we read, in the strong, nervous style of the prophet, "And it came to pass in the days of Ahaz the son of Jotham, the son of Uzziah, king of Judah, that Rezin the King of Syria, and Pekah the son of Remaliah, king of Israel, went up to Jerusalem to war against it. And it was told the house of David, saying, Syria is confederate with Ephraim. And his heart was moved, and the heart of his people, as the trees of the wood are moved with the wind."¹

Their heart might well be moved, for, relatively to the size of the country, the calamity of this invasion by the confederacy was greater than any which has occurred to

¹ Isa. vii. 1.

any modern nation. It seemed, in all human probability, that, unless help came speedily from Assyria, the house of David would be exterminated.

Meantime, the king and his counsellors in Jerusalem were taking measures to withstand a siege of the city, and in that climate the first matter to look after in such a case is the water supply. While so engaged, the prophet was directed to go to Ahaz, taking with him his son, to whom he had given the significant name of Shear-jashub, or "the remnant shall return," and to bid the king not to stand in any fear of this confederacy, or of the overthrow of his dynasty.¹

In chapter vii. 9 the prophet abruptly breaks off his discourse without finishing his sentence, evidently on account of a smile of contemptuous incredulity from Ahaz, who cared more to rely upon Tiglath Pileser in this emergency than upon prophets. Isaiah says, therefore, in deprecating answer, "If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established."

He is prompted, however, to press the king again, and tells him to ask for a supernatural sign from Jehovah, attesting the truth of his prophet's words. Ahaz refuses to do this, in mock humility, on the plea that Moses forbade putting God to test.² Isaiah answers this sneering excuse in verse 13 of the same chapter, and then says that, as the king had evaded asking, Jehovah himself would give a sign.

The remarkable passage which follows in verses 14-16 means that this sign, which could only come of God's foreknowledge, was that a virgin, then evidently known to the king and the company addressed, should be married and bring forth a son, and should call his name Immanuel, or, "God with us." Before this son should have outgrown infancy, Ahaz would find that both the kings

¹ Isa. vii. 4-9.

² Deut. vi. 16.

whom he dreaded should be cut off, instead of the kingdom of David. An intimation is also given that this child would be of a royal or wealthy family, in the phrase that "butter and honey he should eat." The reference is to an Eastern article of diet, esteemed a great delicacy, which only the rich can afford.¹

The practice of giving significant names, commemorative of historical or biographical incidents, is repeatedly followed in the Old Testament. In this case, Isaiah presses it into the service of prophetic symbolism. In this connection we must remark that the prophetic symbolism of the Bible frequently went no further than that which we should call pure metaphor, and was not carried out in fact. For example, Jeremiah states that the Lord told him to take his new priestly girdle of linen, and go to the bank of the Euphrates, and hide it there in a hole in the rock. And he went and hid it by Euphrates as the Lord commanded him. After many days he was commanded to go again to the river and find the girdle. This also he says that he did. Meantime, it is plain enough from the whole narrative that in point of fact the prophet never left Jerusalem at all, and that no one to whom he delivered his message thought that he did.²

The natural inference, therefore, from the passage under consideration, is that Isaiah is about to marry again, and that the transaction referred to in chapter viii. 1-4 is

¹ The writer first tasted this dish when a guest at a Bedouin encampment on the east side of the Jordan. It consisted of freshly churned butter, not salted, mixed with honey slightly flavored with spices. Into this the bread was dipped. It certainly was very palatable. As such a dish could not be common, except in those few districts in Palestine which afford pasture, and so could be obtained in Jerusalem only at considerable expense, this intimation of the princely origin of Immanuel would be clearly understood. This also gives force to the expression in chapter vii. 22, that Judea would become so desolate as to be all pasture-land, and every one left there could eat "butter-honey."

² Jer. xiii.

the carrying-out of this identical prophetic sign to Ahaz in regard to Immanuel. The different name there given to the child—*i. e.*, make haste to the spoil—would be only another new purely symbolical act, with the same intent as the first. This interpretation is further confirmed by verse 18 of the same chapter, where Isaiah challenges attention to himself and his children, Shear-jashub and Immanuel, as much superior verifiable and prophetic signs for the people to trust in than the false oracles, the wizards and the necromancers, to whom they had recourse in their alarm, and which Moses had so strictly forbidden.

If Isaiah were of the house of David, as Jewish tradition holds, in accordance to Oriental custom to this day, his betrothed would likewise be a virgin of the same descent, and well known to Ahaz, who, as head of the house, must be consulted, and give his consent to the marriage, and bear his share in its celebration. In the East, every member of a house or clan is interested in a family marriage to an extent more vital than we can easily appreciate in our wholly different state of society. No union can be consummated until the consent of the cousinhood to the remotest degree of kinship has been obtained. We have already alluded to the very effective reason for this.¹ To Ahaz, therefore, this prophecy ought to have come as a further assurance from Jehovah of the permanence of the seed of David. Such, undoubtedly, was its primary intention.

Whether this peculiar symbolism contains within it a secondary reference to the birth of the Messiah, is much disputed. It cannot be doubted that underlying it, and running on through the whole of the prophecy to its culmination in the ninth chapter, is the great thought that neither the formidable confederacy of Damascus and Samaria, nor

¹ Page 49.

any other earthly danger of the many which the prophet proceeds to foretell, will affect the foundations of the house of David, for—Immanuel! God is with us, because of the son of David, who is to sit on his throne forever. Judah itself is to stand, because it is the land of Immanuel.¹ This suggestive prophecy was admirably calculated to foster in the minds of the people the expectation of a child to be born to the line of David of a virgin of that house, and to lead them to rest upon this promise as insuring the survival of Judah through every national peril.

We would further urge that symbolism is always intended to suggest more than its first apparent meaning. It is a poor symbol which serves but for an illustration. For example, in this case, were the purpose only to give a sign which should express that in about two or three years the confederated kings should be taken away, the growth of a young vine until it bore grapes would have answered as well. But the Virgin of the house of David and her Immanuel have obliged the world to pause and ponder over these strange words of Isaiah, and to inquire whether they do not imply a meaning far deeper than that which Ahaz could possibly have understood by them. It is vain to deny that it is natural to find these words quoted in the New Testament. All the labor spent to prove that in the first instance they could have meant only that which a plant-growth would have illustrated more readily, serves but to increase the wonder why history abounds with such remarkable "coincidences" and "parallels" to fill up the meaning of Old Testament prophecy.

After concluding the prediction in chapter vii. 16, the prophet foretells in picturesque language the judgment to come upon Ahaz and his people for the evil counsel

¹ Isa. viii. 8-10.

of relying upon Tiglath Pileser rather than upon Jehovah.¹ Judea should become the meeting-place of the great Assyrian and Egyptian armies, who would settle down upon the unhappy land like swarms of bees and flies. It would be left so desolate that its most cultivated parts would be overgrown with thickets, which the wild beasts would make dangerous for any unarmed person to approach. Then, as we have already explained, in accordance with the injunction of Moses on the subject,² he takes pains to have the record made, testing whether, in his prediction concerning Immanuel, he was, or was not, a prophet.³

In verses 5 to 8 of this eighth chapter Isaiah returns to a further warning against the unbelieving portion of the nation, some of whom preferred identifying themselves with apostate Ephraim and pagan Syria, instead of with the divinely chosen dynasty of David. This last is typified by the little stream of Shiloah, the source of which is under Moriah and Zion. They would, indeed, exchange the gentle, sacred rill, but it would be for a flood—namely, the Assyrian and his host—which would sweep over the whole land of Immanuel.

The mention of this name recalls the prophet to his reliance on Jehovah, his strength, in a passage which has been justly admired for its eloquence.⁴ Even the rationalistic Ewald remarks upon it, “At this crisis, the eternal and glorified expectation of the kingdom of God was placed in antagonism to all heathen dominion by violence, and nothing is more marvellous than the undaunted attitude of Isaiah in encountering the fury of the dreaded king of kings with the calmness of this blessed hope.”⁵

That this noble confession of faith was, truly, like that of Peter, not revealed to him by flesh and blood, appears

¹ Isa. vii. 17–25.

² Isa. viii. 1–4.

³ Deut. xviii. 22.

⁴ Isa. viii. 9–20.

⁵ “Hist. of Israel,” vol. iv. p. 202.

in the sudden transition in verses 21, 22, in which he casts behind him all those whose miserable recourse in times of threatened danger is in muttering wizards and consultants with the dead, and shows, by contrast, how the true prophet can look into the future. In the view here depicted, Isaiah furnishes one of the most striking proofs to be found in the Bible of inspiration from God.

The great drama opens¹ with a scene too common in those terrible days—a long procession of Tiglath Pileser's captives as they leave their native Galilee, hard bestead and hungry, in the bitterness of despair looking up to heaven and cursing even their king and their God.² As they turn for a last look upon their devastated land, their eyes rest upon naught except the long, low, driving clouds of smoke from their burning villages and homes. The phrase translated "they shall be driven to darkness" is literally the darkness which is driven, or rolls.

Such is the sombre setting of the resplendent picture which now bursts upon our sight:

"Nevertheless no dimness is there to be to her that was distressed. At the former time he brought contempt on the land of Zebulon and on the land of Naphtali, but at the latter time he brought honor on her which is by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, the Galilee of the nations. The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light! They that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined. Thou hast multiplied the nation, and increased its joy; they joy before thee according to the joy of harvest, and as men rejoice when they divide the spoil. For thou hast broken the yoke of his burden, and the staff of his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, as in the day of Midian. For every armor of the warrior, with its brazen noise, and all gar-

¹ Isa. viii. 21, 22.

² 2 Kings xv. 29.

ments stained with blood, shall be for burning and fuel of fire. Because unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Father of Eternity, the Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David and upon his kingdom, to order it and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this."

We have been obliged to depart from the received English version in quoting this celebrated passage in Isaiah, chapter ix. 1-7, owing to its faulty translation, universally admitted. No doubt this will soon appear corrected in the expected Revision of the Old Testament. It is strange that the text should have been rendered as it stands in our Bible, even by Hebrew scholars of the time of James I., because in other passages of the Old Testament they have translated the same words very differently. Thus, the word translated in verse 1, "lightly afflicted," is rightly rendered in Isaiah xvi. 14, "be contemned," and in Isaiah xxiii. 9, "bring into contempt;" "despise" in 2 Samuel xix. 43, etc. Its antithesis in the next clause, there translated "grievously afflict," is "had in honour" in 2 Samuel vi. 22; "honoureth" in Proverbs xii. 9, "glorify" in Jeremiah xxx. 19, and "glory" in Hosea iv. 7, and in many other passages. It is plain from this that the prophet's idea is to contrast the humiliation of Galilee brought about by Tiglath Pileser, which ushers in the scene, with its future glory under the Son of David.

In the third verse our translators indicated in the margin the alternative "to him," instead of "not" increased the joy, which the context shows clearly enough is the true meaning, as the very next verse says, "they joy before

thee as men rejoice when they divide the spoil." The fifth verse was more difficult, because the word rendered "battle" occurs nowhere else in the Old Testament. It is now known to refer to the metal-shod boot of the Assyrian soldier, and is a figure akin to the "iron heel of oppression" in our literature. "The Everlasting Father" is literally Father of eternity, or he who possesses eternity, or, is eternal. This is a Shemitic expression, very common in Arabic, used to designate attribute—Father of—one who has or possesses eternity.

The remarkable thing about this prophecy is its localization in Galilee. This becomes the more noticeable when the circumstances of Isaiah's time are considered. The thirteen original tribes of Israel—that of Joseph being divided into two—were distributed in Canaan from North to South in much the same way as were the thirteen original States of our Union. Galilee, made up of the small tribes of Asher, Zebulon, and Naphtali, would correspond to our New England States; the great and dominant Ephraim, or Samaria, to our Middle States, in which New York and Pennsylvania have each a population more than double that of the whole of New England; while Judah might be said to correspond to our South.

In those days Galilee was virtually much farther from Jerusalem than Boston is now from Charleston. Moreover, it had belonged to a kingdom rival and hostile to that of David for more than two centuries. If we could suppose the success of the Southern Confederacy in its secession, and that bloody conflicts were maintained between it and the Northern States for two hundred years, a parallel to this passage might be furnished by our imagining some Southern poet, at the end of that period, promising the people of New Hampshire and Vermont, and the region around Lake Champlain, an era of unexampled future prosperity under a Southern deliverer.

On ordinary principles it is not at all clear why it is that distant Galilee, and its relations to the son of David, alone forms the theme of Isaiah's vision. It can refer to nothing else. It is in its darkened and despised quarter that—not a great warrior—but a great light, appears. A joyful advent, both because of deliverance from the oppressor—as when Gideon freed Galilee of Midian—and because, henceforth, the people should be saved from all sound and dread of war. This light and joy and peace was to come from the son of David, born for them, he who is to reign on the throne of David forever!

Rationalistic interpreters are obliged, of course, to discover some historic king of the line of David, whom Isaiah knew, and whom he meant to describe as the coming Light and Saviour of Galilee. As he could not, in strict propriety, be the heathenish Ahaz, the most plausible date for this particular prophecy, in this view, would be the beginning of the reign of his son, Hezekiah. The prophet, in a burst of enthusiasm, on seeing the devotion and zeal of the young king for the worship of Jehovah, announces him as the glorious son of David, who is to restore the kingdom to its furthest ancient borders, *i. e.*, to Galilee.

If the description does not fit Hezekiah particularly well—because, in point of fact, he never had anything to do with Galilee, nor caused any light to shine there, his sway never extending anywhere near it—the answer is ready that Isaiah, like any other mortal, was mistaken and disappointed in this, but that, in a religious sense, Hezekiah strove to be a light to Galilee.

In the first year of his reign he held a great Passover in Jerusalem, and sent letters inviting all Israel of Ephraim and Manasseh, even to Zebulun, to join in its celebration. It is true, the account goes on to say that, when the posts went with the invitation from city to city

through that region, the people laughed them to scorn and mocked them; "nevertheless," it is added, "divers of Asher and Manasseh, and of Zebulon, humbled themselves and came to Jerusalem" to this feast, and in that way shared in the light of the son of David.¹

It is easy to ridicule the disproportion between the terms of the prophecy and such a fulfilment, but the objection in the rationalistic mind to allowing any conscious reference on Isaiah's part to *the* Light of Galilee is too fundamental to be shaken by any embarrassments which arise from the imperfect realization of a prediction. To admit that Isaiah foresaw, in any sense whatever, that Galilee should be the quarter of the land with which Christ would become especially identified, and wherein he would set up his kingdom, is to admit prophecy, and one cannot do that without ceasing to be a rationalist.

Isaiah, therefore, could have meant only that Hezekiah would somehow dissipate the gloom and dishonor resting upon Galilee, and raise it to future glory by first delivering it from the mighty Assyrian oppressor, and then insuring it against all subsequent invasions.

If this seem high-flown language to be applied to a king who suffered such evil treatment at the hand of Sennacherib, it is readily answered that no limit can be placed to royal panegyrics in Oriental poetry, and that parallels to the transcendent titles here bestowed upon Hezekiah can be cited from ancient literature and royal inscriptions. The reply to the objection that it still remains singular why Isaiah should have selected remote and lightly esteemed Galilee as the predicted theatre of Hezekiah's glory, instead of the greater neighboring Samaria, is that this perhaps was due to the fact that Galilee was devastated by the Assyrians just at this juncture, and that this brought it temporarily into unusual prominence.

¹ 2 Chron. xxx.

Again, according to rationalism, we come upon a great historical "coincidence," or "chance" fulfilment by Christianity of the whole of Isaiah's prophecy. But neither Hezekiah, nor any other king, can be admitted as its subject, except by attributing to the prophet an imagination inflamed by enthusiasm. In Jesus we have, indeed, the Son of David who was the unsurpassable Light of Galilee, and the King whose rule, wherever prevailing, does away of necessity with all slavery, oppression, bloodshed, and sound of war.

If we try to picture to ourselves the Galilee in which Jesus walked, we have, as elements of color, Tiberius, Herod, Pilate, for government; Pharisee and Sadducee for religion; Stoic and Epicurean for counsel; and all these upon a background of general ignorance, error, cruelty, and misery, the darkness of which the light and peace of our day make it almost impossible to gauge or fathom. And yet *our* light came from Galilee. It was there, according to his wonderful counsel, that Jesus chose his fishermen, who became the transformers of the world, and witnesses to him as the only Light. How could they, from the darkest shadow of Galilee, give light of themselves?

As in every case of Messianic prophecy, history opposes a literal fulfilment to the gainsaying of interpreters. Not only was Jesus the prophet of Galilee when it was everywhere despised—and to this day Islam never uses the term Christian, but sneeringly substitutes Nazarene—but at the present time, on his account, a higher honor and a deeper interest attach to it than to any region in the world. Through the ages unnumbered multitudes have worshipped him, in truth, and not in figure, as the Mighty God, the Eternal One, the Prince of Peace, and the Son of David. Of the increase of his kingdom, and of his peace, since first he began to order it in Galilee, there has been

literally no end. The simple historical fact can readily be demonstrated, that the close of each Christian century has witnessed, throughout the world, a great advance over its beginning in the triumph of the principles by which he governs. Moreover, at no time has the progress of his kingdom been relatively so great as during this our own century; for when we compare it with what it was only one hundred years ago, we may well ask, when was this prophecy more strikingly fulfilled?

2. *The Prophecy of the Eleventh Chapter.*

Directly following the prediction of the Great Light of Galilee, we have a prophetic ode, beginning at the eighth verse of the ninth, and extending to the fifth verse of the tenth chapter. Its subject is the judgment and destruction of Ephraim, or the kingdom of Israel, on account of its pride and wickedness. It consists of four stanzas, each ending with the refrain, "For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still." Its date is evidently near that of the preceding prophecy, since it refers to Rezin, King of Damascus, as still living.

At the fifth verse of the tenth chapter an entirely new prophecy commences, which continues through the eleventh, to the end of the twelfth chapter. By reading the whole composition at once, in a paragraph Bible, where the verses are arranged in the parallel lines characteristic of Hebrew poetry, the close connection of its parts is easily perceived, and its great literary beauty appreciated.

It is plain that this prophecy was written many years after the preceding one, in chapters vii.-ix., for it speaks of both Damascus and Samaria as destroyed. Its reference to the invasion of Judah by Sennacherib is so clear, that its date may be fixed about the middle of the reign of Hezekiah.

The prophet begins with an address to the Assyrian, of whom he speaks as the chastening rod in the hand of Jehovah for the punishment of Judah, that hypocritical nation, idolatrous under an Ahaz, devout under a Hezekiah. Having briefly stated the theme, he first represents, in a striking passage, the haughty conqueror as wholly unconscious of his true relation to Jehovah, and proceeds thereafter to reassure the devout portion of the nation against despondency at the sight of the heathen, arrogant and victorious in his brief day.¹ After God had used the Assyrian for righteous purposes, he would then himself be visited with utter destruction, while the few chosen ones of Zion should survive him and all his glory.

Touching and wonderful, indeed, is the faith which could thus rise above all worldly and temporal appearances! To how many Christians of the present day does the witness of the Church, with her nineteen centuries of vast conquests, appeal as an aid to their faith in an unseen God? But in those terrible days of which we speak, Isaiah had nothing of this kind to sustain his trust. Only weakness and failure seemed to attend Jehovah's cause.

Having spoken the word of comfort and of courage to the true Israel of God during the approaching calamity, the prophet returns to the original subject.² Here we behold the Assyrian army approaching Jerusalem from the north, taking one town after another on its way. The majority of these places mentioned can be identified to this day. The dramatic scene closes with a sight of the invader, standing in a threatening attitude upon the Mount of Olives, celebrated in all ages for the view from its summit of the Sacred City, which first bursts upon the traveller from this point. Then is the day of Jehovah's judgment upon Judah, when all the great ones

¹ Isa. x. 7-15, 16-27.

² Isa. x. 28-34.

of the land shall be cut down. Even the royal cedar of Lebanon, used here to denote the dynasty of David, shall fall mightily [see margin], as falls some monarch of the forest.

Cut down to the ground though the Tree of David be, still there shall remain its hidden but living root. For There shall come forth a rod of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots; And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord; And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord; and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, nor reprove after the hearing of his ears; but with righteousness shall he judge the poor and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth; And he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins. The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together; And the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the viper's den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. And in that day shall the root of Jesse become as an ensign to the peoples; To it shall the Gentiles seek; and his rest shall be glorious.¹

Interpreters of all schools are agreed that this passage

¹ Isa. xi. 1-10.

can refer only to the Messiah. Here, therefore, if anywhere, we have the ideal king of the prophets and his ideal kingdom. The first five verses give the description of his character, and the next five the effects of his rule upon the earth. So totally unlike is the whole conception to the poetic aspirations of any literature or people, that it has long been regarded as a great test passage in the Christian argument from prophecy.

Taking the plain sense of the words, which need very little exposition to make them understood by the simplest minds, we begin first with a figure implying that the royal House of David was to be brought low to the ground, and was even to disappear from the observation of men. The new beginning was to come from the hidden root of Jesse the Bethlehemite, rather than from the kingly tree of David.

To appreciate the full force of this statement, it must be understood that in Palestine trees are never cut down leaving a stump visible above ground, as in the clearing of an American forest. Wood is too scarce and valuable there to allow of this. The earth is removed for some distance around the roots of the tree, and the larger divisions of these are cut along with it.¹ It is, therefore, from a long-buried and forgotten root that the young growth is to spring forth and tower anew in the earth.

We have, unfortunately, no word in our language corresponding to the Hebrew word meaning a young tree-plant, as distinguished from a sprouting vine or bush. The English term "branch" is a very imperfect rendering of the two Hebrew words which are frequently employed after this in the writings of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Zechariah as titles of the Messiah, implying that his first appearance in the world would be low, humble, and unobserved,

¹ Matt. iii. 10.

as a young *tree* first comes up, with little to distinguish it from the commonest herb.

The second verse describes the king, anointed with the Spirit of God for his office. This imparts to him wisdom, understanding, counsel, and power, in the knowledge and perception of *religion*, as the phrase "fear of Jehovah" signifies everywhere in the Old Testament. On that account he should not judge according to either appearances or professions, but according to inner truth and motives. The poor and meek of the world would be those who would have cause to rejoice in his rule. As to the wicked, he is to smite the earth, not with his terrible sword, but with "the rod of his mouth," and the "breath of his lips." It would be difficult to particularize more distinctly than by the use of these expressions a sway which was to be not physical, but moral. Commanding word and precept can alone be meant by them, as every Oriental at once understands.

The matchless figures which follow, each leading up to the climax of the little child, that beautiful type and promise of the kingdom of Heaven, are wonderfully expressive of a mighty and blessed change in the world under the reign of the king. He is to bring all this peaceful transformation, not by force of arms, but by the spread of the knowledge of Jehovah the earth over. In that day he who came up at first as an unrecognized growth in the soil of Bethlehem should finally appear as the lofty cedar of Lebanon, seen from afar by the wearied nations who should seek his glorious rest!

It cannot be supposed that this ancient author had any earthly king, or merely earthly kingdom, in his mind when he wrote this prophecy. Who among kings, then or since, could be his model? It is the Son of David, and his kingdom is to be an universal one. As in the case of the

Light of Galilee, where, as the Prince of Peace, he is to bring all war to an end through the spread of the knowledge of Jehovah, so here his kingdom is to become world-wide only by the use of the same means. As with Micah, so with Isaiah—the beginning is from Bethlehem. With Micah, again, Isaiah sees the far-off nations seeking their peace and rest in Jehovah, gathering, in the one vision, around the Tower of the Flock; in the other, under the branches of the Tree from Jesse.

No one can deny, however he may account for it, that this prophetic conception finds its perfect counterpart only in Jesus Christ. But for him, the strong nations from afar would have known nothing of the God of Zion; much less would they have sought to learn of his ways, and to rest under his shade. Beside him, who can claim the attributes of wisdom, understanding, counsel, and might, in religion? Of all who have ever gained an empire over the minds of men, it is Jesus alone of whom it can be said that he judges not as men judge, but according to the hidden intent of the heart. How searching is this his “quick understanding” is only known to those who, striving to obey this king, learn, through obedience, that his commands must regulate the whole of that inner world into which no man can look or judge.

It is also the poor and the helpless who have had most cause to rejoice at his coming into the world to “reprove” for the oppressed and the slave. How often, on their account, has he indeed smitten the earth with the mighty sword which he came to send into it! But it is the sword of his Word, as here predicted.

The transformation in character caused by his rule means an abiding kingdom for the Messiah, far beyond the time-limit of the reign of any earthly monarch, however long or prosperous. The centuries are needed to

modify in man that innate fierceness and cruelty unequalled by the most savage beast. Even at this late day of civilization, the national symbols illustrate the traits which men most admire, and by which they prefer to be represented. Lions, leopards, wolves, and eagles are the chosen insignia. No people has ever taken a lamb or a dove. Nations might be mentioned wherein the qualities most praised and sought after are best typified by the serpent.

Yet the reign of Jesus has already changed multitudes of the most warlike races into the gentlest children of the Highest. Ulfilas, "the Wolf Cub," first of missionaries to invent an alphabet for savages, gave to Teutonic speech its written characters. From them Gothic warriors learned the Gospel of Jesus. Danish pirates were the ancestors of John Howard. The author of that noble Christian hymn, *Veni Creator Spiritus*, was a warrior-king of the dark ages. We are only beginning to conceive of the splendor of our human nature in the time when, according to this old vision, the Christianized Asiatic is to be added to the yet imperfectly transformed European and American; when each nation and race will urge the others to "know Jehovah," and all will learn of him to hate ferocity, cruelty, treachery, and everything which doth hurt or destroy.

After the description of the changed world under the Messiah, follows a vision of Restoration. It is Israel brought back "again the *second* time."¹ Not, as at the first time, only from Babylon, but now from every quarter under heaven. With all divisions healed, with every foe subdued, the long wandering of the Covenant People ends in the beautiful anthem of the twelfth chapter, with the chorus from the Song of Moses, "Jehovah, Jehovah is

¹ Isa. xi. 11.

my strength and my song. He also is become my salvation!"

3. *The Prophecy of the Twenty-fifth Chapter.*

After the prophecy which closes with the twelfth chapter, we enter upon a portion of the book which carries us back to the long-forgotten conflicts and scenes of the prophet's own age. Unhappy Judea was desolated by invaders from every side. Damascus, Ephraim, the Moabites, Edomites, Arabians, Philistines, and a little later both Assyrians and Egyptians, brought the worst calamities of ancient war into every part of the land. The world then was one universal theatre of violence and bloodshed.

Isaiah turns from one to another of the enemies of his people, and utters the judgments of God upon them in succession.¹ The first and longest of these denunciations is a powerful one against Babylon, the arch-oppressor, that guilty city which for many centuries had been the real head of Asia, even during the time of the military domination of the Assyrian, and which, after supplanting him, inherited his place as the enemy of Israel.

If these prophecies were taken separately, it might be said that they only illustrate the resentment which an Israelite would be likely to feel at the wrongs which his people had suffered at the hands of strangers. But we soon come upon one of those unparalleled passages, characteristic of the sacred vision throughout, which shows that no bitterness of patriotic feeling was allowed to exist when the great Idea of the future was in view. Under whatever aspect the times of the Messiah are contemplated, it is prophesied that all the nations of the world should partake in the blessing.

¹ Isa. xiv.-xxiv.

This appears in a striking passage which occurs in the great prophecy regarding the Jews themselves.¹ The beginning of it contains a dark view, indeed, of the land of Judah, to which reference is made by the term earth, visited with calamity upon calamity on account of the persistent sin of its people, until it ceases to be inhabited. So complete should be this desolation, that the few escaping from destruction to distant lands would give thanks to God, in ejaculations, after the manner of men who have unexpectedly survived some appalling catastrophe.² This overthrow should come especially on the wealthy and proud of the land, its rulers and its kings, represented, as is common in Old Testament imagery, by the heavenly bodies, the moon and the sun.³

This twenty-fourth chapter is generally accepted by commentators as referring to the final devastation of Judea by the Babylonians, because it describes so graphically the accompaniments of those captivities of whole peoples, happily never repeated since the days of Nineveh and Babylon. When we realize these hideous cruelties, we feel thankful that those great, wicked cities of Mesopotamia have been so utterly destroyed that their very sites seem to have been smitten with an everlasting curse.

At the last verse the prophet, as is his custom, passes abruptly from scenes of national ruin and shame to a vision of the great Restoration.

Here, as in chapters xi. and xii., the penitent and chastened nation is represented coming back to Mount Zion in procession, as the pilgrims of old came up to the House of the Lord, with a song of gladness and praise, mingled with weeping and confession. The exquisitely beautiful expressions in this ode have been the comfort of the Church of God in all ages.

¹ Isa. xxiv.—xxvii.

² Isa. xxiv. 14–16.

³ Isa. xxiv. 21–23.

After the opening ascription of praise to Jehovah, allusion is made to the utter destruction of the great capital of the oppressor, Babylon, the most strongly fortified city which the world has seen, the building of the wonderful walls of which cost untold thousands of poor captives their lives.¹ The Divine power, which alone interposed to save the weak when about to be overwhelmed by the hosts of the heathen enemy, is then represented in a fine poetical figure, which, however, is so marred in our translation as to be wholly lost to the English reader. Thus, the word strangely rendered "branch," in verse 5, is really the "war-song," or cry, and is parallel to "the noise of the strangers" in the previous line. This "noise" is here likened to the ominous sound of an approaching hot simoon from the desert, a sound which fills even the wild beasts with instinctive terror. As its scorching blast sweeps along the earth, it sends up vast columns of dust, which soon veil the heavens in unearthly darkness, while men and animals alike flee to the first shelter of rock or wall to escape its fatal breath.

It is this desolating, darkening wind which the prophet sees arrested by the approach of the higher rain-cloud of heaven! To appreciate, therefore, the beauty of the whole of this wonderful metaphor, which is continued into the Messianic prophecy of the verses which follow, we should read the entire passage from the fourth verse thus—

For thou hast been a strength to the poor,
 A strength to the needy in his distress,
 A refuge from the storm, a shelter from the heat,
 When the blast of the terrible ones is as a storm against the wall.
 Thou shalt cause the [simoon] roar of the aliens to subside,
 As the heat, yea, the hot breath of the desert, passes from under the rain-
 cloud,
 So shall the war-cry of the terrible ones die away!

¹ Isa. xxv. 2-6.

Then shalt the Lord of Hosts make unto all people in this Mountain [Zion]
A feast of fat things, a feast of wine on the lees,
Of fat things full of marrow, of wine on the lees well refined.
And He will destroy in this mountain
The covering itself which overhangs all people,
And the veil which is spread over all nations.
He will swallow up death in victory ;
And the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces ;
And the rebuke of his people shall be taken away from off all the earth ;
For the Lord hath spoken it.

Read in its whole connection, this passage shows distinctly that it can refer only to those last days towards which the prophets turned for relief from the heart-aching scenes of their own times. We are reading the anthem of the Covenant People while returning to Zion. They are reviewing their long and wonderful history, so full of manifestations of the faithfulness and mercies of God. "Lo, this is our God, we have waited for him, and he will save us. This is the Lord, we have waited for him. We will be glad and rejoice in his salvation. We have a strong city. Salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks. Open ye the gates that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in. Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee. Trust ye in the Lord forever, for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength."

Thus, and more, through stately sentences, the poetic excellence of which even a poor translation and foreign prose cannot entirely destroy. Among the figures occurs very naturally that of a resurrection from the dead, as descriptive of the return of the far-dispersed and long-lost people: "Thy dead men shall live. Yea, my dead shall arise. Awake and sing ye that dwell in the dust [for thy morning hath come]. With thy dew as the dew in the grass, and the earth shall yield up the dead."

While the eye of the prophet kindles with this far-off vision of a redeemed Israel, we still have the remarkable fact, as is constantly the case, also, elsewhere in Messianic prophecy, too often repeated to be an accidental coincidence, that the restoration of Israel is predicted as coming *after*, not before, the turning of the Gentiles to the Lord. Thus Micah depicts, first, Israel banished from Zion and the Temple. These holy places are left ruined and desolate. Later they are resorted to by Gentile worshippers, coming up as whole nations; and then, "I will assemble her that halteth, and I will gather her that is driven out." So, in Isaiah xi., it is after the Gentiles have sought their rest under the shadow of the Messiah, that "the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people;" while here, Israel, in approaching Zion, finds all nations already there assembled at the feast of the Lord.

In order to appreciate fully the significance which the prophets gave to the term "Mount of the Lord," this vision must be taken in connection with the picture of the last days, given by Micah, which Isaiah himself quotes. It is plain that, as used by Micah, this expression means the extension of the knowledge and worship of Jehovah to all nations, the whole earth becoming, in this way, the Mount of the Lord. In like manner Isaiah looks upon the world at large in Messiah's day as God's holy mountain, where they shall not hurt nor destroy, "for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of Jehovah as the waters cover the sea."¹

In the passage before us another and a most touching feature is added to the great reunion of the nations in this Mount of the Lord. The world, previous to that glad day, is seen as a vast desert, over which the terribly desolating

¹ Isa. xi. 9.

blasts of war continually sweep, scorching every living thing. Whoever has once witnessed the coming of one of these storms of the desert will vividly appreciate what the here-mentioned "veil" is. Nothing can better describe this dread appearance. The blue curtain sometimes dropped over the earth by falling rain is heaviest at the cloud, and scarcely touches the plain, but the dense and lurid simoon breaks forth like vast columns of smoke from the great pit itself, and rushes directly upward, as if it would cover the heavens forever. For many hours afterwards the atmosphere is pervaded with a strange hue, which resembles the peculiar darkness occasioned by an eclipse of the sun.

Can anything figure more truly this sorrowful world before the advent of the Prince of Peace? Men were everywhere aliens to each other, and everywhere resounded the cry of war. Rome closed the doors of the Temple of Janus but once in seven hundred and fifty years, and after that, the second time, only for a brief hush of peace as the hour for the birth at Bethlehem drew nigh. This is sufficient illustration of the unlikeness of any part of the then world to the holy mountain in which they shall not hurt nor destroy. How could any good thing grow in such a desert? What could men expect therein except to perish from thirst and starvation, unless Heaven's merciful rain-cloud should come to disperse the earth-born veil, and turn aside its deadly covering, and change the wilderness into the fruitful field where the harvest-feast of the Lord might be held?

Here we have, therefore, another magnificent passage in the grand prophetic symphony, another variation on the wonderful theme of good tidings of great joy and light and life, which shall be to all people. We have listened to the opening chant, when the nations say to one

another, Come, let us go up to the mountain ; when they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks. Again we hear of the Light of Galilee, the Prince of Peace, at whose coming all sound of hostile tread and sights of blood shall pass away forever. Again, under the King of Bethlehem the fiercest of men are to be led by a little child, and now, under a peaceful sky, we see many coming forth from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south, to sit down together at the great banquet where all shall be love and rejoicing, and where the Lord himself shall wipe away tears from off all faces !

4. *The Prophecy of the Thirty-fifth Chapter.*

The next prophecy to which we would call attention possesses an affecting interest on account of its connection with him who was the last and the greatest of the prophets, and who, ere he met a prophet's death, was directed to its consolations. John the Baptist and his murderer Herod were, in their day, the embodiments of the ancient contrast between the true Israelite and the true Edomite. The preceding chapter, foretelling, as it does, the wrath to fall upon Edom, is the most solemn and terrible piece of writing in the whole Bible ; the one we are now considering contains the suggested contrast.¹ In order to understand it, both Edomite and Israelite must each be understood, historically and personally.

The Herodian, or Idumean, family, descending from Esau, fulfilled, as has already been remarked, the prophecy, "and by thy sword shalt thou live, and shalt serve thy brother [Jacob], and it shall come to pass when thou shalt have the dominion, that thou shalt break his yoke from off thy neck."² In the time of Christ, this reigning

¹ Isa. xxxiv.

² Gen. xxvii. 40.

family, while ostensibly sharing the religion of their Jewish subjects, in point of fact, were troubled with no religious scruples whatever. They entertained towards the earnest Pharisees the same secret contempt and amusement which a modern Stamboul Turk, a graduate from Paris, entertains towards the fanatical muftis and imaums of the mosque. It would be a serious mistake, however, to suppose that such an Osmanli was in the least inclined to become a Christian, because no Moslem. On occasions, the Europeanized Turk can plan a massacre of Christians with more ability and zeal than the fiercest true believer.

Among the Jews of the time of Christ the Herodians constituted a party in the nation, devoted, on principle, to the fortunes of that family. A very definite principle it was, based upon elements of character which give to Esau his distinct place in every age and country wherein the Church and the world are found, holding their instinctive mutual relations.

In distinction from ethics, which has concern with the behavior of men to one another, the sphere of religion lies in man's relations to the unseen world. To a true Herodian, therefore, all religion must be useless and repulsive, because that world he wholly ignores. The Herodians, so far as they could belong to any sect, were of that of the Sadducee. The doctrine that there is neither angel, nor spirit, nor immortality, was a necessity to those who cared for no other life than this, and whose principle consisted in making the most of the world as it is. They were the practical politicians of their day, the thorough men of the world, found in all the public posts and offices, especially in the High-priesthood and the Sanhedrim, and taking an active part in the complicated intrigues arising out of the relations of Judea and Galilee to the Roman government.

To men of this stamp all human concern about religion is a matter for ridicule. The test question propounded by them to Jesus was a characteristic one, when they asked him what the woman should do on the morn of the resurrection, who found herself claimed by seven husbands. So, at the last, when Jesus was exposed to different manifestations of human evil, to Roman cruelty and to Jewish rage, it was reserved for Herod and his company to suggest that of mockery, when he caused him to be arrayed in a gorgeous robe, and sent him, thus clad, through the streets to Pilate.

There is no sign of hostility and of irreconcilable opposition equal to that of scorn. It is significant to note that no hereditary enmity seemed so inveterate and so bitter as that shown by the Edomite to Israel all the way through the centuries. It was Doeg the Edomite who alone could be found to murder the unfortunate priests and their families, at the command of Saul, because of their unsuspecting hospitality to the fugitive David. It was the Edomites who gathered exultingly as the Chaldeans burned Jerusalem, and cried, "Rase it, rase it, even to the foundations thereof."¹ From the beginning, the spirit seems always to have been the same. Love of rivalry and of strife, ridicule and contempt both for peaceable character and for anything approaching religious sentiment, and aptitude for murder, have always gone hand in hand, in the Esau type, with certain showy qualities, begotten more of carelessness of disposition than of any really good or noble traits, yet sufficient often to induce the world to give preference to the ready duellist over the law-abiding saint.

Such, in essentials, was the father of the race. Born in the one religious household of the land, he soon showed that he cared little to inherit its distinctive portion. He

¹ Psa. cxxxvii. 7.

preferred to surround himself with his four hundred armed rovers, and to lead the—in that age—admired life of a hunter. We must remember that hunting was then a royal pursuit. When whole countries were unsafe on account of wild animals, and the lion or tiger could be attacked only with sword and spear, the hunter held a very different place in men's estimation from that which he holds now, and Esau, on that very account, might have legitimately inspired as much parental pride as is called forth by a soldier-son in our day. But to such a disposition, the birthright of the Covenant, namely, to be the chosen of God then, and the blessing to all nations and families of the earth in the future, did not have even the value of a supper. He did not hesitate to show that this was his appreciation of such ideal goodness. Of course, as a man of the world, he never dreamed of parting with his inheritance in the flocks and herds. His brother was soon obliged to yield them all up, and to flee from the sword which was awaiting him.

Esau chose for his country a land which nature herself seemed to have made most suitable for him and his race. It is a long, narrow strip of fertile mountain, rising on either side out of wild desert valleys, its whole extent furrowed by tortuous and deep defiles, in which the towns and cities nestled, often built, like eagles' nests, in the very clefts of the rock. The capital city, called Petra by the Greeks and Romans, has been considered one of the wonders of the world. Its temples and palaces, which are carved out of the shining pink granite, tier above tier, have remained from generation to generation, fulfilling, in their desertion, the very letter of the judgment here pronounced by Isaiah. The country was one great robber stronghold, and no one could pass through it without some special guide or protector.

Alas for the year of recompenses for the controversy of Zion! The race which was to live by the sword survived until it developed its most perfect types in Herod and his family. Herod the Great won his throne by murder and intrigue, and kept it when obliged alternately to side with and desert Pompey, Cæsar, Brutus, Antony, and Augustus. He managed to please each new master better than his predecessor, and the last one strangely gave him the final confirmation of the dearest aspiration of an Edomite, the kingship over Judea. After putting to death one and another of his own children, he added the finishing touch, illustrative of his spirit. In his dying moments he gave orders that the leading men of the Jewish nation should be assembled in a certain enclosure, and massacred as soon as he had breathed his last, in order that there should be a great, even if involuntary, mourning at his death!

A worthy son of such a sire was that other Herod who, according to Josephus, caused John the Baptist to be conveyed to the Edomite stronghold of Machærus, so that he might be far from Galilean succor. The ruins of this castle overlook as desolate and lonely a landscape as there is in the world. It tops one of those steep, bare mountains which shut in the Dead Sea as if by everlasting bars. As far as the eye can reach, nothing appears except the rocky slopes and salt hills of the desert, looking down on those lifeless waters which lie at the bottom of the deepest gulf on the face of the earth. Across that gulf the prisoner, looking from his dungeon through the apertures made for the archers, could see the mountains about Zion. Can it be wondered at that, as the weary months passed, and the hourly peril in which he stood from an enmity which he well knew was implacable, weighed upon his heart, the ways of God grew more and more dark to him, and that he longed for a renewed assurance that Jesus was indeed

the King who should come? How often would he study the words of the older prophets, searching for light on this greatest of hopes for God's people! Why was it, he asked, if Jesus were truly the Lord's Anointed, that he did not come in power to save his servant from the destroyer?

As his messengers were returning we can imagine how John watched them toiling up the steep ascent, and how eagerly he asked them for the reply of Jesus. But lo! it was not given to them in direct words. "Go your way and tell John what things ye have seen and heard: how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the glad tidings are preached. And blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me!"¹

Words seldom mean enough for expressions of the deepest import. Here, the greatest and strongest soul needed the utmost help that could be communicated to him, as the last hour approached. How fitting it was that the last of the prophets should still have the voice of prophecy, linked so significantly with the doom of Edom, to sustain him to the end!

Art thou cast down in thy lonely prison in Edom, seeing nothing about thee but the desolation of the desert? "The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for this, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing, the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon. They shall see the glory of the Lord and the excellency of our God."

Is thine heart beginning to fail at the thought of the murderous tyrant's power? "Strengthen ye the weak hands and confirm the feeble knees. Say to them that are of a fearful heart, be strong, fear not [the Edomite].

¹ Luke vii. 22.

Behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompense; he will come and save you."

Dost thou need the sign for this? Lo, "the eyes of the blind are opened, and the ears of the deaf are unstopped. The lame man leaps as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing. For in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert."

Do the ways of God for his people seem to thy mind as devious and uncertain as the roads through Edom to Jerusalem, where the traveller falls a prey to ravenous and unclean beasts? Behold, "an highway shall be there and a way, and it shall be called the way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those; the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein. No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon; it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there. And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and shall come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads. They shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away!"

Some writers, who seem as little able to appreciate the deep spiritual meaning of Old Testament imagery as Esau, or Herod himself, explain this beautiful prediction of Messiah's kingdom as referring only to the return of the Jews from Babylon, for whom a highway should be made across the desert, on their journey to Jerusalem. The everlasting joy herein spoken of would be only the rejoicing of Zerubbabel's humble train, on approaching the ruins of the city of their fathers, with its fallen temple. To such minds the feast of the Lord for all nations on Mount Zion is also nothing but a poetic fancy of a restored Jerusalem, so prospered as to attract once more the caravans of Sheba, as in Solomon's time.¹

¹ Isa. xxv. 6.

But as in the former vision the whole world of men is likened unto the desert, swept ever and again by scorching blasts, so here the figure is that of a great wilderness of Edom, filled with robber dens and wild beasts' caves. God's people, passing through it, find all the paths leading to the Better Land dark and dangerous. Often, indeed, do they fall victims to the cruel and licentious Manassehs and Herods, who kill the Isaiahs and the Johns as they seek the way to the heavenly Zion. And yet this same world, so like the desert-doomed Edom, is to become as the garden of the Lord, with all the excellency of Carmel's wooded height and Sharon's flowery plain given unto it, and the way through it to the City of Everlasting Joy will then be so plain that the simplest minds among God's poor cannot fail to find it.

"Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist," said He who knew all men, and what was in man.¹ Beyond this poor world's estimate of greatness, seemingly ever destined to be revised and rejected by each succeeding age, there is yet to come a final and a true judgment, when the record of the ages will be made up. Then the strength and greatness of that spirit, silenced in the dungeon of Machærus at the bidding of an adulteress, will appear.

Yet even now we have some means of knowing what was in that young prophet who seemed to meet such an untimely end. His age, in all its aspects, moral, religious, social, and intellectual, was as far from affording a way for the coming of the kingdom of God, as was the land of Edom from offering an easy road to Zion, the Dead Sea lying between. It needs much study and reflection to appreciate adequately the innate power required to awaken such a generation from its sleep, to

¹ Matt. xi. 11.

make such men's minds fit to receive the Sower when he came with his seed. So mighty was the impression made by his one voice raised in that moral wilderness, that years afterwards the Apostle of the Gentiles discovered that the foundation for the great Christian Church in far-off Ephesus had been laid by the work of John. We know also that he prepared the way for his Master, by finding that the Apostles Peter and John were made ready by him to follow Christ.

How can we estimate, therefore, that blessing which renders the least and the feeblest of minds in the kingdom of God more certain of the joy and rest which remaineth for his people than that great man, when death cast its shadow over him ! The world, to us, is no Edom ; no lion nor ravenous beast awaits the pilgrim in our day ; the road to the City which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God, is open now to all the wayfarers upon earth.

The Prophecy of the Forty-second Chapter.

If the book of Isaiah were divided into two volumes, according to the nature of its contents, the beginning of the second naturally would be at the fortieth chapter, because from its first verse, on to the end of the book, we have one continued poem, rather than a series of detached prophecies. It differs, in a number of important particulars, from the contents of the first portion. Its key-note is struck with the very first line, maintaining throughout an exquisitely varied yet connected theme of consolation for the people of God who were languishing in captivity, telling them that the exile had accomplished its purpose of judgment, that now God would show that the world and its kingdoms were in his hand, and that all things would be made to work together for the prosperity of his people.

The solicitude of Jehovah for his own chosen Israel is ever and again reiterated in many beautiful passages intended to assure the stricken people, left few and homeless among the powerful heathen, that not only would they be preserved through all peril, but that a great era was awaiting them, when all nations and peoples would acknowledge and minister to the glory of Zion.

A striking feature of this portion of Isaiah illustrates a great change which took place in the nation as one of the results of the Captivity; that is, the frequent allusion to the folly and weakness of idolatry, which is condemned and ridiculed as degrading and superstitious. The great announcement is also made, and many times repeated, that God had now chosen Israel for the very purpose of being his servant, and had commissioned him as such for a witness among the nations.¹ Through this people, scattered over the world, men were to learn that Jehovah was the only God; that besides him there was none other; that idols were the work of men's hands, and that the gods whom they feared had no existence. This office of the children of Israel as messengers and servants of God in the world is put before them as a further proof that they should be preserved from destruction, and that the thoughts of God towards them were thoughts of love and peace.

It is instructive to note how prophecy here again anticipates history. It was only at Babylon that Israel first learned and understood this great mission. Ever afterwards, the race turned its back upon idolatry, and began that propagation of the knowledge of the one true God destined to work the momentous results of the spread of Christianity and of Mohammedanism. It is scarcely credible that, without the previous and long-continued influence of the Jewish synagogue, these faiths would have

¹ Isa. xliii. 10-13; xliv. 8, 9, etc.

extended as they did, the one among the Western, the other among the Eastern peoples.

While the attention of the student is thus drawn to this new aspect of the relation of Israel to God and to the world, a remarkable variation in the use of the term "Servant of Jehovah" is found to occur in a number of important passages, which has attracted the notice of scholars in all ages. Although its application to the people of Israel, or, at least, to its godly portion, is plain enough in many instances from the context, yet its reference in others is so directly personal and particularized that it becomes very difficult to apply the language to any people, or collective portion of a people. It seems rather to belong only to some one individual. This was evidently felt by the ancient Jews, who did not hesitate to apply the most of these prophecies to the Messiah, and to him alone. The terms of many of them, however, have afforded such strong arguments to Christians in subsequent centuries in favor of the claims of Jesus as the Messiah that the later Jews have felt constrained to deny their Messianic character, and to give the passages in question a great variety of other expositions instead. In this they have naturally been seconded by modern rationalists, who, though for different reasons, are obliged to find other reference than such as would establish the fact of true prophecy in the Old Testament. To what extent the Christian Church is justified in her claim that these passages are revelations by God of the person and work of Jesus Christ will appear on their careful examination.

The first of these passages occurs at the beginning of chapter xlii., and reads thus:

"Behold my Servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my Spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. He

shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth. He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law.

“Thus saith God Jehovah, he that created the heavens and stretched them out; he that spread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it; he that giveth breath unto the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein: I Jehovah have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles; to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison-house. I am Jehovah: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images. Behold, the former things are come to pass, and new things do I declare: before they spring forth I tell you of them.

“Sing unto Jehovah a new song, and his praise from the end of the earth, ye that go down to the sea and all that is therein; the isles, and the inhabitants thereof. Let the wilderness and the cities thereof lift up their voice, the villages that Kedar doth inhabit: let the inhabitants of the rock sing, let them shout from the top of the mountains. Let them give glory unto Jehovah, and declare his praise in the islands.”

This poetic extract falls naturally into three stanzas. In the first, which includes the first four verses, Jehovah himself is the speaker, as he calls the attention of the world to his servant, his chosen one whom he upholds, in whom his soul delighteth, whom he has anointed with his Spirit for the purpose of bringing forth judgment to the

Gentiles. This expression is always understood to mean that he should give his laws and institutions to the nations of the world, as the latter clause of the fourth verse makes clear. Though he was thus to become the universal lawgiver, personally he would be humble and unobtrusive, not heralding his coming, as is usual with Eastern princes, by proclamations in the streets. He would also deal gently with all the weak and those ready to perish. This is denoted by the expressive figures of the bruised reed and the smoking flax. The latter metaphor is borrowed from the common experience in Eastern households before the introduction of modern means of lighting a lamp. In Egypt, Greece, and Asia generally, the ordinary lamp was a shallow cup of oil holding the wick of flax in a slightly protuding spout. This receptacle rarely contained oil enough to burn through the night without being replenished. Long habit accustomed the women to waken as soon as the light began to waver. Then the smoking wick must be pulled out, and blown upon very gently to rekindle the flame, for a strong draught of air would extinguish it altogether.

In keeping with the intimation of his humble beginning, the fourth verse also implies that his mission would appear unpromising at first, but that, nevertheless, he would not fail nor be discouraged until the Greeks, or the nations of the West, should wait upon him for his law. Here it must be remembered that the term "isles" in Old Testament prophecy did not have, by any means, that indefinite signification which we in modern times, and especially in the English language, are wont to give it. The Hebrews knew of no isles except those in the Mediterranean, the home of the great Greek race, from Cyprus, behind the mountains of which the sun can be seen to set from Lebanon, to the great archipelago, the especial abode

of those Ionians so frequently mentioned in the Old Testament under the name of Javan or Yoan.

In the time of Isaiah, about 750 B.C., the Greeks were pushing their settlements along the whole Mediterranean coast, and were founding Syracuse, Tarentum, Rhegium, Crotona, and other great cities in Sicily and southern Italy. The names of Greek kings of Cyprus appear in the list of tributaries of the Assyrian monarchs who were contemporary with the prophet, and it is very probable that at the time when the Hebrew prophets were making these remarkable predictions regarding the submission of the Greek and Western peoples to the law of the Servant of Jehovah, Homer himself was composing his immortal songs.

In the next stanza Jehovah addresses his servant directly, first, with a solemn affirmation that he alone is the Creator God, who has made the earth and man and man's spirit, and that he will no longer allow the allegiance due to him to be given to the graven images and gods whom the heathen blindly worship.¹ Man's spirit had been bestowed upon him for greater things, and, therefore, God now called his servant for the righteous purpose of becoming the Light of the Gentiles, and of making them partakers of God's covenant. He was to open their blind eyes, and to lead them out of the prison of ignorance and superstition in which they were bound, into the light and freedom of day. The allusion here is, of course, to the hopeless darkness of ancient dungeons. We find this figure of imprisonment frequently used as descriptive of the state of the Gentiles. The prophets never speak of the heathen peoples with contempt, but rather with a warm-hearted pity, as of those under bondage to the darkness which must exist where God's light does not shine.

In the last stanza the prophet himself speaks, calling

¹ Isa. xlii. 5-10.

upon all the nations of the world to raise the song, new to them, of praise to Jehovah, on account of this glad commission of God's servant.¹ The order in which he calls for this anthem from the peoples is significant, because it uniformly occurs in similar passages in all the prophecies. The nations of the West, towards the great sea, come first, and those of the East last, Palestine lying between the Mediterranean on the West, and the desert of Arabia Petra on the East.

The term translated "islands" is not at all the same word as "isles."² It is found so often in Isaiah in connection with deserts, *i. e.*, in speaking of the ruin of Babylon, "The wild beasts of the islands shall cry in their desolate houses," and of Edom, "The wild beasts of the desert shall also meet with the wild beasts of the island,"³ and again, where it evidently means *dry land*,⁴ that the reference here is doubtless to the distant oases in the vast deserts of Asia.

Among the ancient Jews there appears to have been a diversity of opinion as to the application of this prophecy. The translators of the Septuagint, living in the great Greek city of Alexandria, were evidently inclined, by virtue of their surroundings, to make it commend the mission of the Jewish people to the Greeks. Instead of translating the first verse, they paraphrase it thus: "Jacob is my servant, I will uphold him. Israel is my chosen one, my soul hath embraced him." On the other hand, the Chaldee paraphrase applies it only to the Messiah. This reads, "Behold my Servant, the Messiah. I will cause him to come near, my chosen." Among modern Jews some refer it, as does the Septuagint, to the Jewish people, some to Cyrus the Great, and some to Isaiah himself, because he is called by Jehovah "my servant."⁵

¹ Isa. xlii. 10-13.

² Isa. xlii. 12.

³ Isa. xlii. 22; xxxiv. 14.

⁴ Isa. xlii. 15.

⁵ Isa. xx. 3.

Each of these renderings, except the last, has its advocates among modern rationalists, to which, however, they add another, characteristic of German ideas, namely, that the servant of Jehovah, here referred to, is "the collective body of the prophets." We need spend but little time on any of these interpretations except the first one. "The collective body of the prophets," on the other hand, is the creation of a professor's study. A conception like this, of an individual who should not break a bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax, applied to a collective body of prophets, dervishes, or wise men, could never be possible to an Oriental mind. Neither could Cyrus, who is spoken of as the Lord's Messiah, or anointed, be the fulfilment of this passage.¹ The figure applied to the great conqueror and soldier by the prophet is that of "a ravenous bird from the East,"² not that of a Light to the Gentiles, nor that of the unassuming and gentle one who would not cause his voice to be heard in the street.

The application of these verses to the Jewish people, spoken of generically as Israel, has the support of a number of passages in this poem, wherein there can be no doubt that the Jews as a nation are referred to as the chosen, the elect, the beloved servant of Jehovah, who are to do a great work in the world. The really weak point in this application is, that comparatively few interpreters carry it out consistently in the other passages, where, as here, the servant of God is spoken of as an individual. When the Jews as a nation are thus addressed, it is very plain from the context that no individual nor single personage can be meant. But in those passages where the Servant is spoken of in the singular, both grammatically and in idea or conception, the interpretation should be uniform. It cannot be held to mean a people at one time,

¹ Isa. xlv.

² Isa. xlv. 11.

the righteous portion of the people at another, and still at another an individual, Cyrus, or Isaiah, or some unknown prophet slain by the Jews in Babylon, or Hezekiah, or Jeremiah, or Judas Maccabeus, or the Rabbi Akiba. Some writers, both among Jews and Rationalists, do maintain the application to the Jewish people throughout, but as a rule the difficulty of making a collective term apply to many of the most important passages wherein the servant appears, or speaks, or acts, or suffers and dies, is so great that some purely individual fulfilment must sooner or later be sought for.

Moreover, it has not been much in accordance with either Jewish character or temper to apply some of the features of this individual portrait to their nation. Though they may have been content to be called a light among the Gentiles, there never has been anything more distasteful to the Jew than the idea that foreign nations might also become the covenanted people of God. This line was always sharply drawn. In New Testament times, we find that the greatest difficulty with which the infant Church was obliged to contend was due to the inability of the great body of the Jewish Christians to admit the Gentiles, as God's people, without their first becoming Jews. In what sense, also, it is possible to speak of a nation as not breaking the bruised reed, nor quenching the smoking flax, while it was establishing its law among the Greeks, it is difficult, indeed, to understand.

Not so, of course, when the parallel is drawn with Jesus. Here it must be admitted by all, however different the inferences deduced from the admission, that a Christian, wishing to represent his Master's character and career in a short figure which should express his own belief, would find this prophecy fit exactly to his need. He is the Chosen One in whom God was well pleased, to whom God

gave the Spirit not by measure, to prepare him for his great work of giving his law to the nations of Europe. Who would have supposed that the magnificent, intellectual race, proud of its Homer, its Plato, its Aristotle, of its wonderful achievements in every field of human excellence, scorning all foreigners as barbarians, would ever accept for its God him who came, not as a hero, but as a carpenter of Nazareth, and whose voice, after being heard only in the villages of Galilee, was silenced at Jerusalem, on a cross? That beginning might discourage John the Baptist, but the foreknowledge of it had no such effect upon Jesus. He looked forward, while prophesying his own death, to the time when his name would be received with reverence by all nations. It is he who has taught the world the hard lesson of the might which belongs to the king who is too gentle to break the bruised reed. This lesson, that the sword is weak, and that the power which will finally prevail is the opposite of force and pride, is the very last which the world will learn.

As a matter of historical fact, what Jew has become the Light of the World—for such is the synonym of Light of the Gentiles? After the coming of Christ, the Jewish people suddenly ceased to do anything for the world, withdrawing itself within the iron hedge of rabbinical tradition. Nothing can surpass the spirit of stern hatred towards all the “nations” with which the Talmud is imbued. Jewish apologists in our day are fain to conceal this aspect of that body of Jewish doctrine, but it cannot be denied that it is solely to the preaching of the Christian Gospel that the great European races owe their knowledge of the Jehovah of the Jews, with all the momentous results which that knowledge involves.

The Prophecy of the Forty-ninth Chapter.

This prophecy may be said to be a continuation of the foregoing, only that here it is the servant of God himself who is the speaker, and who is represented as standing and calling upon the Isles of Greece to listen to the announcement which he makes. It is an important test-passage in the debated question, Who is this servant of God, so often spoken of throughout this poem as a servant?

At first sight the third verse would appear to settle the question decisively in favor of the uniform use of this term as a poetical personification of the people of Israel. But, on further examination, the interpretation of this passage lends itself decidedly to the other meaning, and gives color to the supposition that the prophet employed the name of Israel designedly here, in order to show, by force of contrast with the national name in the sentences which follow, that the servant of God is a great person, himself typifying, instead of being typified by, Israel. The speaker in the third verse says in verse five that God had destined him from his birth to the task of bringing back Jacob, and reassembling Israel, and in verse six that a still greater object than that of raising the tribes of Jacob, and restoring the preserved ones of Israel, is to be his glorious work, etc.

On account of this plain antithesis in the language employed, the ancient Jews referred this prophecy to the Messiah as the truest embodiment of the name "Israel," the original meaning of which is "the Prevailing Prince with God." The Messiah is so named here on the same principle that he is named David in Isaiah lv. 3, 4, and in Hosea iii. 5, Jeremiah xxx. 9, Ezekiel xxxiv. 24, etc., and likewise that in Malachi iv. 5 the Messenger who is to prepare the way is called Elijah the prophet.

The modern Jews, on the contrary, for reasons readily appreciable when the passage comes to be read, endeavor to make the servant of God and the Israel of the third verse mean Isaiah himself. Thus Aben Ezra says that the prophet speaks of himself as Israel, and that, therefore, the verse should read, "thou [Isaiah] art my servant, descended from Israel, in whom I will be glorified." It does not, however, read thus, and yet in this interpretation most rationalists also agree, because of the difficulty of finding any one else, according to their principles, to whom the language may apply. It is significant in regard to the whole discussion that no Jewish scholars attempt to explain the "servant" of this passage as the people of Israel, although some rationalistic writers still venture to do so. The grounds for supposing that Isaiah regarded himself as the servant of God here represented, we shall discuss hereafter. Meantime, these very efforts at interpretation but go to prove that the eye of the prophet rested upon an individual Israel, a single personal servant of God, whose coming and work are not only distinct from, but often antagonistic to, the people of Israel. He is, however, the real Israel, the true embodiment of him who is mighty with God in the world.

Considering the very slight connection between the ancient Hebrews and the Greeks, it is remarkable what a prominent place they hold in these prophecies. We must recollect that the glorious history of the Hellenic race was yet all to come, and that Greece was then as unconscious as an infant of her great future. If, as many critics maintain, the date of this writing be during the reign of Cyrus the Great, the Greeks were so imperfectly known at that time in Asia, that Herodotus represents Cyrus as asking who were the Lacedemonians, who had sent an embassy to him. The Greeks, on their part, knew so little about

the Hebrews, that even long after this the same inquisitive historian, who saw and investigated so much in his travels, though he visited Tyre and Sidon, cities lying at their very door, yet makes no allusion to show that he ever even heard of their existence.

Still, it is the nature of the announcement to the Greeks, made by the servant, which renders this passage so remarkable. He begins by saying that he comes into the world—that is, from his birth—at the special call of Jehovah, who is to use the word of his servant as his conquering sword and divine weapon among men. The figure of the second clause of this verse is that of a gleaming dagger half covered by the hand, which, together with the arrow, enumerates the complete equipment of an Assyrian soldier. Such a victorious power the servant declares he is decreed to become, but it is his word, proceeding from his mouth, which is all this, by which the God of the Hebrews is to be glorified in the world.

He then goes on to tell the Greeks that he had apparently failed in this mission, laboring in vain, and spending his strength for naught, and that he could only leave the issue of it to God. The next two verses indicate clearly where the failure had been, namely, in his appointment as a shepherd to gather together the scattered and lost sheep of Israel, and to lead them back to their God. But as an offset to his disappointment—though the ultimate success of this mission is still implied—God had, meantime, given him the greater honor and work of being a light to the Gentiles, and the salvation of God to the ends of the earth. Then comes the wonderful language expressed as the solemn declaration of the Holy One himself, that “to him whom man despiseth, to him whom the nation abhorreth, to a servant of rulers, kings shall see and arise [to do homage], princes also shall worship!”¹

¹ Isa. xlix. 7.

How great a probability is there that Isaiah, or an unknown prophet of the Captivity, or any other of the prophets, would speak of himself in this way? If Isaiah were the author, how did he come to leave behind him the mighty East of his day, its Nineveh and Babylon, its Damascus and Samaria, to lift up his voice to the European-tongued savages who then roamed the unknown Western seas only as pirates? How could he imagine himself the conquering sword of the Almighty, the shepherd of Israel, the light of the Greeks, and the one to whom the foreign kings should bow, although he was hated by his own nation? Such exegesis only shows the helplessness of human reasoning powers when mastered by foregone conclusions.

The Christian, on the other hand, finds the prophecy, from the very first word, significant of the great historical fact that the world was to be called upon to listen to the glad tidings of a Saviour, not in the ancient sacred language of the East, but in the matchless speech of the Greeks. Wonderful also it was that his heralds in those early days were obliged to acknowledge that the nation to which he belonged, and to whom he originally came, should despise and reject him, should deliver him up to the rulers as more abhorred than a murderer, and should cause him to be put to death among thieves.

Certain it is that to his name now the mightiest earthly kings and potentates pay homage, as to one mightier than they. How has this come to pass except by the conquering course of the word of his mouth, making its way from conflict to conflict through the centuries? The hatred of the "nation" to the one name which the nations reverence is something unparalleled in history. Where else does a race stand in such singular relation to that which the rest of the world regards as its greatest glory?

Again, we have here the expression of tenderness tow-

ards the nations of the stranger, characteristic of Messianic prophecy. It is the acceptable day of Time, the day of salvation, when Jehovah gives his Christ to make the covenant with the Gentiles which is to settle the world, and to make its ancient wastes habitable. One mighty heritage was reserved through the ages for Christian peoples to discover. They founded in America an empire far greater than that of Babylon or of Cyrus. Untold multitudes, besides, the descendants of those who then hunted in the forests of Europe, whose state of benighted savagery differed little from that on the banks of the Congo to-day, have found in Jesus the merciful and blessed Shepherd who has led them out of darkness up to his pastures of light and life. If we reproduce in imagination the condition of the mass of mankind in the best days and most favored regions of the ancient world, and compare it with the freedom and progress everywhere possible to the inhabitants of Christian lands, we can appreciate what an acceptable time for the nations was the day in which the Apostles first turned their faces towards the West to proclaim the fulfilment of this prophecy, by offering to Europe the benefits of that salvation which the Jews had spurned.

The Isles of Greece were all that the Hebrews knew of that continent to which both the intellectual and the political dominion of the world was later to pass. Before that time no human mind could have surmised that the East was not to be forever the one quarter of light and civilization. For as many centuries previous to the reign of Cyrus as the number is now since his day, it had been Egypt, Babylon, and Phœnicia alone, wherein men had thought and written, built and discovered; while the West was rightly called the region of darkness in other senses than that the sun sank there into night.

We have, therefore, another of those proofs that a prophet

speaks, when it is towards the North and the West that he first turns to see the flock of the Messiah coming to the Great Shepherd. But how far beyond our vision his eye ranges is shown as he turns again from the West to behold the crowds going up to the Mount of the Lord from the land of China. It is infinitely less improbable now that ere long that great and ancient family of man will join in the brotherhood of Christ with the nations of the West, than it was in the prophet's day that the Greek race would be converted to the rejected Messiah of the Jews; yet there are multitudes of worldly-minded Esaus who scoff at such a dream, and even among Christians there are few who gladden their hearts with the "sure word of prophecy" which has already shown how great is the kingdom which is to come.

The Prophecy of the Fiftieth Chapter.

It cannot have escaped the notice of the reader that an element of difficulty, rejection, and humiliation gradually develops in the prophecies regarding the servant of Jehovah, with which we have been occupied. He begins his work in an humble, noiseless manner, but he is not to fail nor be discouraged till his rule and law are established in the earth.¹ Later we find that he has labored in vain and spent his strength for naught in his first efforts to gather the lost sheep of the house of Israel, and that, ere he should become the object of worship to the kings of the world, he must be despised of men, and abhorred by his own nation.²

The next mention which occurs of the servant of God brings out still more strikingly an experience on his part of the bitterest opposition, accompanied by the greatest personal insult. It is to be found in an isolated passage

¹ Isa. xlii.

² Isa. xlix.

in chapter fifty. The most cursory examination shows that this passage is distinct from the verses which precede it. These form the close of the prophecy of the restoration of the Jews, which commences at the thirteenth verse of chapter forty-nine. This prophecy opens abruptly with the words of a speaker who tells us that he is the servant of God.¹ He begins by saying that Jehovah had especially qualified him to speak from experience the word of comfort to the weary. The term translated "learned" refers, not to one who has been taught learning, in our ordinary sense, but to one who has learned experimentally.² What the teaching was in his case, he goes on to explain.³ It was a hard lesson indeed. In submitting to it according to God's will he gave his back to the smiters, and his cheeks to them that plucked off the hair; he hid not his face from shame and spitting.⁴ As formerly, after laboring in vain, he committed his cause to God, so now in the evil hour he stays himself upon him who judgeth righteously; and is assured of the opponents who are arrayed against him: "lo, they all shall wax old as a garment; the moth shall eat them up."⁵

Having indicated how God had thus fitted him to be one who could speak the word in season to him who is tried, he calls upon all those who fear Jehovah, and who obey the voice of his servant, following his example, to trust the Lord, and to stay themselves upon God when they walk in darkness and have no light. Here the worship of God and obedience to the word of his servant are linked together as alike belonging to true religion. The intimation of the high authority with which the servant is invested becomes still plainer in the next verse, where he threatens all who refuse to be guided by him, and who try to disperse the night of the world by the use of lights

¹ Isa. l. 10. ² Isa. l. 4. ³ Isa. l. 5. ⁴ Isa. l. 6. ⁵ Isa. xlix. ; l. 9.

of their own making, that they shall receive of his hand the awful fate of lying down in sorrow.

The figure in verse 11 is very striking, and familiar to any one who has seen a bridal procession by night in Lebanon. The attendants, who may number several hundreds, all carry torches made of bunches of the scrubby mountain heath, attached to a staff. Oil is poured over these, and they are lighted at the moment when the bride approaches on horseback. The torches burn rapidly, and in burning throw off a shower of sparks which seem to surround the bearers like spray from a fountain. It is this brief illumination in the gloom of night which the servant compares scornfully to the efforts of those who reject his offer, when the inevitable darkness of earth overtakes them. There is no doubt, in the Oriental mind, as to the meaning of "lying down in sorrow;" nor can anything express more vividly than this comparison to the blaze of crackling thorns the feebleness of all human attempts to cast light into that darkness of the grave which equally awaits the righteous and the unrighteous.

Both Jews and rationalists have been obliged to abandon all attempts to make the servant of Jehovah in this passage other than some individual. The majority of them, therefore, explain that it is Isaiah who here speaks of himself, and of the ill-usage he sustained at the hands of his generation. Others say that it is Jeremiah, or some unknown prophet of the Captivity. We have no record of precisely such insults endured by these prophets in their lifetime, yet we can imagine the use of such language, descriptive of their sufferings, until we come to the mention of the servant. Here, as we have urged before, it is against all principles of sensible exposition to create a personage for the occasion. If the servant be Isaiah in this passage, then let him remain Isaiah also

wherever the servant is mentioned. In this view of the case, it is the prophet who is not to quench the smoking flax until he have given his law to Greece and established his covenant with the nations; and again, he it is who turns to the Greeks because abhorred by his own nation, to whom kings are to bow. Moreover, just here, it must be Isaiah's own sad personal experience which is to lighten the grave for the godly, and to clothe his hand with power to consign the ungodly to its rayless gloom.

He to whom alone it is possible to believe that this august conception of one who comes with light at the supreme hour really belongs, applied this prophecy to himself.¹ The Christian religion is nothing without a personal Lord, who stands near every believer at the moment of death. With this article of faith omitted, Jesus would have no more fitness to speak the word in season than would Socrates. The death of both these men was the result of an unjust sentence. They both died in the presence of disciples, who have given to the world the words of their respective masters, as they approached the dark portal through which all men must pass. Of how much avail to us is the light of the philosopher? Turning to him who, for our sakes, endured the worst pangs which the deep enmity of the human heart could inflict, in the trust that the suffering Servant of Jehovah is now mighty to save to the uttermost, we feel that this world can never be left in total darkness, even though its mortal day must end in apparent night.

The Prophecy of the Fifty-second and Fifty-third Chapters.

We now come to that great prophecy which has only to be read in order that its very grave importance in the Argument from the Old Testament may be understood. No

¹ Luke xviii. 32, 33.

part of the New Testament is more distinctively Christian in the statement both of fact and doctrine, and its record of the experience, the sufferings, and the death of the Servant of God, with the singularly clear and reiterated declaration of the Divine reason therefor, has caused this ancient writing to be more anxiously studied than any other in the world.

Like the prophecy immediately preceding, which, indeed, prepares the way for it, it begins independently, and bears no relation to the previous sentences. Unfortunately, also, our chapter division—as is common in Isaiah—is here at the wrong place, and should be made at the thirteenth verse of the fifty-second chapter. This, like the prophecy in chapter xlii., represents Jehovah himself introducing his Servant to the notice of men, with the exclamation, “Behold!” The first announcement contains the chief theme, namely, the great exaltation of the Servant of God in the world, and, after the detailing of a long and remarkable series of reverses and humiliations, it recurs again in all the fulness of triumph at the close. We can correctly paraphrase the whole passage as follows, Behold, the Servant of God is to prosper [see marginal reading]; to be exalted and extolled, and be very high! As many men were shocked and repelled at the sight of him, because of his marred countenance and disfigured form, so also will many nations own him as their High-priest, who sprinkles on them the purifying blood of sacrifice. The kings of the nations shall reverently hold their peace before him, for that which had not been told them they shall see, and that which they had not heard shall they consider. But who would believe such a report of his exaltation, and who would recognize in him the strong arm, the power of God? For he shall appear like a tender plant, which comes up late in the dry ground of summer, and he will disappoint us

all when we see in him no heroic form nor mien. Rather 3
 is he despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows
 and acquainted with grief, and he turned, as it were, his
 face from us, while we despised him and esteemed him
 not. Yet it is our griefs which he bore, our sorrows 4
 which he carried, while we were thinking that he was the
 stricken one of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded 5
 for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities;
 he was scourged in order that we might have peace, and
 with his stripes we are healed. For we had all gone astray 6
 like wandering sheep, each of us turning to his own evil
 way, and the iniquity of us all the Lord hath laid on him.
 He was oppressed and spitefully intreated, yet he opened 7
 not his mouth; as a lamb brought to the slaughter, and a
 sheep before its shearers ^{is} dumb, so he opened not his
 mouth. He was arrested by an unjust judicial sentence, 8
 and who shall tell of his life? for he was cut off out of
 the land of the living; stricken for the transgression of
 the Lord's people. There was a grave appointed for him 9
 among evil-doers—but he was with a rich man in his death
 —though he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in
 his mouth. Thus was it the Lord's will that he be bruised 10
 and be put to grief. But when he made his soul an offer-
 ing for sin, it was that he should see his seed and pro-
 long his days, and make the cause of God to prosper. He 11
 shall see of the travail of his soul and shall be satisfied!
 By the knowledge of my righteous Servant—saith the Lord
 —shall many be justified, for their iniquities he shall bear.
 Because he poured out his soul unto death, and was num- 12
 bered with transgressors; because he bore the sins of many,
 and made intercession for the transgressors, therefore will
 I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide
 the spoil with the strong!

We have ventured upon this paraphrase for the better

understanding of this wonderful prophecy. One of the characteristics of Hebrew poetry is an indefiniteness in the use of pronouns, which continually shift from the first to the second or third person, and from singular to plural, or the reverse, so rapidly that the continuity of meaning may seem, to our ears, much broken. In the original, these abrupt changes have all the force of poetic drama, and express great excitement on the part of the writer. Thus, at the opening, the prophet, speaking *about* the Servant, says, "as many were astonished at **THEE**," and then, "*his* visage was so marred more than any man"—"so shall *he* sprinkle many nations." This tells us that the author, before he can complete the sentence, finds himself in the immediate presence of one so dreadfully wounded in face and mangled in form, that he is impelled to speak as if directly addressing the sufferer, only to check himself for the moment and assume the narrative form; then soon to address in turn God, men, speaker and hearer together.

This mode of composition is strange to us until we recognize its object, which, indeed, could be secured in no other way. As the Orientals knew neither stage nor drama, the effect of rapidly changing and exciting scenes could be produced only by some such sudden breaks in tense and person. There is a similar indefiniteness, due to the same peculiarity of style, in the employment of such partitives as *but*, *although*, *because*, *therefore*, *when*, *etc.*, the proper signification of each being left to the particular context where it occurs. In the paraphrase, we have not made the language read differently from its demonstrable connection in any case. As regards the meaning of words and terms there is, fortunately, little dispute.

The word rendered "astonied" means, to be greatly moved at some grievous spectacle.¹ The prophet evi-

¹ Isa. lii. 14.

dently intends here to contrast the exaltation of him who became the High-priest of the nations, and the worshipped of kings, with some passage in his life when he presented a spectacle of shocking bodily disfigurement. None but a high-priest could "sprinkle" a nation. The metaphor of "a root out of a dry ground," implies also the almost certain prospect of the perishing of a new growth in Palestine, if it come up after the rainy season has passed, and four months of complete drought are to be expected.¹ So unpromising would be his future. "We hid" should read "he hid," and, of course, the next words ought to be "from us," and not "from him," indicating that on account of his humiliation he would shun observation.² The translation "prison" is a mistake.³ The word properly means violent oppression, or aggression, or arrest, as of a criminal, and this is settled by the parallel expression "from judgment," which can have no other meaning than "a judicial sentence." Taken together, the sense undoubtedly points to his arrest and trial by an oppressive yet judicial procedure, which results in his being put to death. This last is a distinct statement, preceded by the pathetic exclamation of the witness of the scene—the prophet—"who [in such a court] can look for his life?"

In the ninth verse the translation is again faulty in saying that "he made his grave." The verbal form used is impersonal, referring to the grave, not to him. "A grave was made, or appointed, for him." In the next clause "the rich" does not correspond with "the wicked," for it is in the singular, and should read "a rich man." The idea is plain that as a mark of the highest indignity it was designed to give him the burial of a malefactor, but that—in what way it does not appear—he was with a rich man in his grave, that is, in a rich man's grave. The word "death"

¹ Isa. liii. 2.² Isa. liii. 3.³ Isa. liii. 8.

of our translation is literally "deaths," and is the same as that translated "grave" in Job xxi. 32—"he shall be brought to the grave."

We proceed at once to the fulfilment of this prophecy in every detail, as well as in every principle, by Jesus Christ. Taking the opening statement, we ask, what cause has prospered as his has done, not alone in being the only survival from the date of its beginning, but as a continually augmenting and an abiding cause? What name is so exalted now, what character so extolled, what position so high as his? The fact that his opponents are yet to be found everywhere deceives many as to the place in the world filled by Jesus. When they perceive that he is still to a great extent "despised and rejected of men," they become wholly unable to look on the other side of the question. It is felt that one whose claims are so generally scorned can be but a weakling, and thus this mistake—now very ancient—is repeated from generation to generation. From Caiaphas, who could scarcely imagine that the dead Nazarene would give any further trouble by his kingly assumptions, to Voltaire, who said that it had taken twelve men to establish Christianity, but it would take only one—himself—to overthrow it, the deposition of Christ has ever been accounted an easy task. Why, therefore, should it be different with "modern thought?" Or why should the unbelief of our day be considered strange or ominous? The truth is that, were it not for the disturbing element of religion, the exaltation of the name of Jesus above every other name on earth would not admit of a moment's dispute. At the present time, regarded simply as a question of fact, and not one of opinion, how stands the Tree from the root of Jesse, which came up in the dry ground of Nazareth, compared with any other tree of our modern forest?

No explanation, on natural principles, has ever been given of the mysterious reference in the next verse to the marred visage and mangled form of the Servant of God. This humiliating spectacle is to be to many a stumbling-block, but opposed to them whole nations are to be seen looking up to the One on the cross as to their great High-priest, who cleanses them with sacrificial blood, while kings stand before him in awe and wonder. Who would have believed that report when the words "Ecce Homo!" were uttered? And yet, such has been its literal fulfilment that during centuries the greatest aim of genius in art was to represent, at the bidding of kings, some new aspect of the marred Face and Form.

This, however, is a minor consideration, when compared with the insight given in this chapter of the living power of Jesus. For what reason have the nations stood before him? Because he was so extraordinary a teacher of morality? No. Instead, plainly evident, though often admitted only with the greatest reluctance, we have the doctrine of the Cross as the divine sacrifice. This is the sole explanation of the mysterious and enduring power of his name, because, linked to it is the further conception of his exaltation as Intercessor for man before the Throne, his offering of blood being sufficient to cleanse us of all sin. It is simple historical truth to say that, except for this view, not one nation on earth would ever have looked towards him. The idea, from its very nature, is so unexampled, that we cannot wonder at its representation as something unheard of and unforeseen.

As we pass on in our review, we are struck with the steady development of the applications of the text to Jesus, each new feature growing consistently out of the preceding. When he first appears, it is with no sign of the force, power, and self-assertion admired by the world

in a leader. With a following, mostly Galilean, of fishermen, publicans, and devout women, he made no attempt to enlist the sympathies of the learned or influential classes. Through the lines of the New Testament record we can easily see how much courage it required, in men of recognized position, to seek his company by daylight; very much as the Christian of to-day, in spite of the exaltation of Jesus in public connections, yet finds it often difficult to "confess" him in society, composed of fashionable or scientific celebrities. As the beginner in this experience, he was virtually more of an outcast than the loneliest exile. Wherever he went, for the most part, he could escape the sting of scorn in look or gesture only by walking with averted face along the crowded way.

Of no other human being can it be said that he is despised and rejected of men. Ordinarily, such a fate so quickly consigns the unfortunate ones to oblivion that they cannot continue to be considered at all. The question, "What think ye of Christ?" has never lost its pertinence from the day when his own nation preferred a murderer to him, down to that of the latest expression of contemporary unbelief.

As we ponder the Christian view of the object of the Master's life, we can see why he alone fulfils this Scripture. Men do not need sharers in their prosperity, but the thought that Christ became a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, in order that he might bear with us our griefs and carry for us our sorrows, has done more to lighten the heavy-hearted throughout this deeply shadowed world, than all the combined consolations derived from poetry, science, and philosophy.

But it is well known that Christian doctrine goes still further in accounting for the influence of the sufferings of Jesus than in that he became thereby a sharer with

men of their griefs and sorrows. As in the prophecy, this but leads up to the distinctive point in the faith, namely, that he suffered and died "for the remission of sins."¹ Without the Atonement, the cross of Christ has no more significance than the poison-cup of Socrates. If this fundamental article of Christianity has no correspondence with Old Testament prophecy, it is doubtful whether Jesus can be said to fulfil Scriptures which fall so far short of a real vision of the cross. However this may be, the announcement in the prophecy before us of an atonement for sin, accomplished by the suffering and death of the Servant of God, exceeds in amplification and clearness of expression any one statement of this doctrine found in the New Testament itself. How can such a conception be enunciated more distinctly or with more precision than in these words—"He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed—The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all—For the transgression of my people was he stricken—When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin—For he shall bear their iniquities"?

In fact, the more we study this passage, the more strongly does the wondrous efficacy of the sorrow and death of the Servant of God appear as the central idea. It is *because* he was thus made an offering for sin that he shall prosper and be exalted and extolled and be very high. *Because* he poured out his soul unto death, he shall become the High-priest of the nations, to bear their iniquities. Plainly, the Servant's greatness is, throughout, made to depend upon and develop out of his divinely appointed suffering for the sins of the whole world. "All we, like sheep, have gone astray; and have turned, every one to

¹ Matt. xxvi. 28.

his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.”¹

When from principles we proceed to details, this fulfilment becomes still more impressive. Here the difficulties of any other interpretation rapidly increase as the facts unfold before us. We have already spoken of the marred visage and form. This is enlarged upon in the statement that he was wounded, bruised, beaten, and scourged. We then behold him wrongfully apprehended and led to a trial, meekly enduring all without protest or resistance. By a judicial, but wicked, decree—for he could be convicted neither of sedition nor as a deceiver of the people—he is cut off out of the land of the living, with the last possible added device of malignity in that he was numbered with law-breakers, and provided with a felon’s burial. Yet, strangely enough, he is in death to be “with a rich man.” It is foretold further that as he poured out his soul unto death, he made intercession for the transgressors.

In the forty-ninth chapter we first read of the Servant of God as he whom man despiseth and the nation abhorreth. With the next expression, “a servant of rulers,” we are entering the very judgment-hall where the King was brought before the Roman governor. The next view gives us a glimpse of the Chosen One surrounded by the soldiers and servants of the high-priest.² Here the whole scene is present, without the omission of one important detail, describing each step from Gethsemane to Calvary, ending in the shameful death, followed by the interment in the tomb of the honorable counsellor.

The convincing power of these facts is not entirely because they appear as literal fulfilments or exact correspondences, but because they determine to a certainty that

¹ Isa. liii. 6.

² Isa. l. 6.

they are dealing with the experience of an individual sufferer, who can by no possibility be resolved into an abstract personification. The mind and sight of the prophet are fixed upon one Form, one Person, who passes through a conflict in which he seems utterly crushed, being at last laid in a grave, though not, as intended, a dishonored one.

Why does not this end all? From the beginning of the world death has terminated every career, with one exception. Each year after his death makes a man more and more a mere memory, or, at best, an example to be imitated or shunned. After death the world passes men by, as the traveller passes objects by the wayside. The greatest must finally drop out of human sight and ken. But with Jesus, death began all. To the astonishment of his murderers, his handful of followers shortly heralded him as living. Inspired by that belief, they instituted at Jerusalem a work the results of which now tower over the whole earth, ever confronting and anticipating the world, in its onward movement through the centuries.

This experience, wholly unprecedented in history, is distinctly foretold in this prophecy as appertaining also to the Servant of God. It is *after* he has been cut off from the land of the living, and been with a rich man in his death, and given his life as an offering for sin, that he shall prolong his days, and the will of God shall prosper in his hand. Then shall he see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied. The justification of men from their sins by their knowledge of the Righteous One is also prophesied as following upon his sacrifice. The great vision closes with a captive world in his possession. The great and the strong yield to him because he had been numbered with transgressors and made intercession for them.

The resurrection of Jesus is the foundation-stone of the Christian Church. If he be not risen, then is the

faith vain. Without that conviction, nothing is left to Christianity. A dead Master is no Master at all. The more profoundly the Christian realizes that his Lord ever lives to direct his steps, and that at last he will meet him face to face, the more powerful is he to overcome evil, and to further the "pleasure of the Lord" in the world. Of what avail would be the wounds, the stripes, the crucifixion, were that death to be like every other death, and not followed by an endless life, so that he could say—"Lo! I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world"? Throughout the long ages the belief in a living Christ has been the spring of life, and the stimulus to work, which nothing has been able to overcome or supersede. It goes on gathering strength with each succeeding generation. This victorious life dating from death, this triumph coming after crucifixion, is the marvel of history; here we find it also the theme of prophecy.

The history of the interpretation of this passage by the Jews is of great interest. Before the coming of Christ, and for some time afterwards, it was customary, as many modern rabbis admit, to refer it to the Messiah. The Chaldee paraphrase shows this. It reads—Behold my Servant, the Messiah, shall prosper, etc. Several passages in the Talmud make a similar reference. The remarkable correspondence, however, between its predictions and the life, death, and atonement of Jesus Christ, caused it to be so frequently used as an argument against their Jewish opponents by the Christians, that the former gradually abandoned its Messianic application, and adopted a great variety of expositions instead, as in the case of the other prophecies already treated. Some of them still clung to a modified Messianic interpretation, maintaining that there would be two Messiahs, one of whom should suffer humiliation and death, while the other should come

as a triumphant king. Among later Jews, some suggest Isaiah, others Jeremiah, while others again regard the Jewish people as the suffering servant of God. In this last most modern rationalistic scholars join; but the difficulty of making language so specific in its individuality apply to a nation has been so great that the range of their guesses has also included Isaiah, Jeremiah, King Uzziah—because he died a leper—King Hezekiah, some unknown prophet slain by the Jews in Babylon, and lastly, the Macabees! The interpretation referring to the Jewish people represents them as suffering vicariously for the sins of the Gentiles, and dying for the heathen, which the Gentiles finally perceive and acknowledge with repentance. This, however, has never been much relished by the Jews, but it is evident that their perplexity in the matter is very great.

The Prophecy of the Fifty-fifth Chapter.

After the great prophecy which we have just considered, we have still others, and those of great importance, regarding the Messiah, but in which the title of “Servant of Jehovah” ceases. This would seem to mean that with his humiliation, sufferings, and death his service was accomplished, and the work for which he was sent into the world completed. The form of a servant, therefore, is now laid aside, and the kingly name of David applied to him instead, in order to express that which he is to accomplish for men by ascending the throne of the promised eternal kingdom. It will soon become evident that it is the place of no earthly king which he fills, but a heavenly relation towards men, which is consequent upon the sacrifice offered for them here below.

All interpreters agree that the prophecy of this chapter refers to the Messiah. As a description of the nature of his

kingship, its total exclusion of all conceptions of a political kind, and its wonderful spirituality, grow upon us the longer we study its expressions. He is called David here, as he is in Jeremiah, in Ezekiel, and Hosea, where he is viewed as a king, and not as at his first appearance from humble Bethlehem and Jesse, nor as when he lived the life and performed the work of a servant.¹ He is now the prince, the leader, and commander of the peoples of the world. The word translated "witness" should properly be rendered "prince," as it stands in the ancient Chaldee paraphrase, or "lawgiver," from the meaning of the word in the original, as one who admonishes or teaches men; which meaning, indeed, is indicated by the parallelism of the verse itself.²

As such, he calls the nations to himself. These are the peoples afar off from the commonwealth of Israel, who have never heard of such king nor kingdom, who are seen, as is everywhere the case in Messianic prophecy, coming to acknowledge his reign, not only voluntarily, but with purposes totally different from those which pertain to thoughts of other kingdoms. The ambassadors who carry the summons of this king have but one message for the nations. They are to come and be reconciled to God, and receive the forgiveness of their sins. Hearing this invitation, which draws all men of their own joyful accord, they hasten unto him.

The motive which brings the nations to the heavenly king is the mighty instinct of religion, that most universal and powerful of all the elements in humanity. In obedience to the demands of this instinct, men have made greater sacrifices than any which they have made in satisfying other impulses of their being. Even the strongest affections of the human heart have been surrendered at its bidding.

¹ Jer. xxx. 9; Ezek. xxxiv. 23; xxxvii. 24; Hos. iii. 5.

² Isa. lv. 4.

But for every instinct in the world of life there is to be found a corresponding object or purpose which explains both its existence and its power. What, therefore, is the purpose of religion in man, which fills him with that deep unrest never disturbing the brutes, unless it be to bring him back to his Heavenly Father, from whom he has so long wandered, in whom alone he can find peace? Even those high forms of earthly good, the result only of civilization and mental development, even the enjoyment of brilliant and intellectual society, are too temporary and too limited lastingly to satisfy man's spirit, which is so soon disappointed with the completest fulfilment of its worldly anticipations.

The prophet begins this announcement of the Messiah's elevation to the headship of the world by appealing to this same noble hunger and thirst of the soul, which speaks plainly of its high descent. Freely will the King bestow of his boundless and royal store on all who will come and allow the deepest cravings of their nature to be met to the full. It requires thought to conceive of a human soul as being truly *satisfied*, and were aught further needed to witness to the Divine inspiration of Hebrew prophecy, it would be found here, in the insight of these words. They tell us that satisfaction can be realized only by the return of man in spirit to his Maker. The Hope of Prophecy, "the sure mercies of David," are revealed to be that which was never conceived of by Jewish rabbi, or even by Christ's own apostles before Pentecost, namely, the coming of One to establish in us the covenant of an everlasting union and harmony with our Father; to set up a kingdom on earth within us, not without or over us, until at the last we shall be satisfied when we awake in his likeness. Nought else satisfieth. Christians are not the only ones who bear this testimony.

None have spoken more feelingly of the weariness of the world than have many who have enjoyed all that it has to offer.

The presentation of the Messiah as king is coupled with the assurance that God is now near, and that he may be found, ready to receive the estranged children of men. "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." In unmistakable connection with these words, however, is the statement that the conditions of this pardoning mercy are not of man's devising, but of God's own infinite counsel, as much above the counsel of man as the heavens are higher than the earth.

It is owing to this very difference between God's thoughts and men's thoughts that the salvation of the cross is rejected by so many. There is no one doctrine of the Christian religion to which such opposition is offered as that in which God is brought near to men only by him who died in order that their souls might live. For this reason the Atonement is sometimes caricatured as the dreadful invention of theologians who represent the loving Father under the guise of a vengeful deity, who can be propitiated only by the blood of his Son.

We could not suspect the existence of the countless worlds beyond our own except for the light which comes to us from them. In like manner, the Atonement tells us more of the life beyond than we could of our unaided selves conceive. In the former case, although we can learn very little about that of which we would gladly know all, yet we are assured that the heavens and the earth are one. In the latter, at least, we can plainly perceive that the Atonement may be of infinite importance to a universe of spiritual beings, responsible, like ourselves,

to one and the same divine law. Without adverting to the worth of a being endowed with man's capacities, if he is to live and use them, not, as here, during the few years of a fettered life, but through all coming ages, we would ask those who deem this little speck of earth not sufficiently important to be the scene of a divine life, suffering, and death, whether law can become different—one thing in its application to the powerful, another for the weak, either in the material or the moral world? A single poor negro once stood to hear, from the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States, that he had no rights which a white man was bound to respect. Without doubt that insignificant slave thus became the determining cause of the greatest catastrophe of modern times, shaking to its very foundations that government which is now the most firmly established of any on earth, and which felt not the slightest jar at the assassination of its two best-loved chief magistrates.

With the highest order of living ones in the heavens, therefore, the rule must be the same as for us, just as the greatest and the smallest of the physical worlds obey no other physical laws than ours. Hence, the problem of man's restoration to God must concern every responsible being in the universe. When we shall have ascended to the great court on high, it may be found that the fate of man has involved issues as far indeed above our human thoughts as the heavens are above the earth. With our present feeble conceptions we can at least grasp this one idea; that to other creatures, who have known from of old who the Son of God is, the sacrifice on Calvary may appear a greater witness, both to the love of God, and to the evil of sin, than would the destruction of the whole human race in vindication of the law, which, nevertheless, must stand forever and ever. As the doctrine of immor-

tality completely disposes of the insignificance of man, so the divinity of the Messiah completely alters the mystery of the Atonement. We pause before the transcendent subjects of eternity which it suggests.

In whatever way the offer of forgiveness and restoration may be received, this prophecy tells us that the divine work shall go on and prosper. As the blessed rain, coming a pure gift from heaven, makes the earth fruitful, so the world of men shall be transformed and blessed by him who shall lead them forth to the joy and peace of a restored inheritance, like unto their original Eden home. So shall human redemption stand, and "be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not end."

The Prophecy of the Sixty-fifth and Sixty-sixth Chapters.

We have spoken of the significant change which appears after the fifty-third chapter, in the cessation of the title "Servant of Jehovah." The student cannot fail to notice as well a parallel change in the tenor of the passages referring to Zion and Jerusalem, which will prove of no less profound import.

The same strain of consolation and promises of future glory with which this division opens at chapter forty is continued in even greater fulness of figure and expression; but, mingling with the notes of joy and triumph, there now develops steadily a recognition of a powerful and persecuting section of the Jews themselves. The wickedness, hypocrisy, and apostasy of this portion of the people are frequent themes of the prophet's heaviest denunciations, and the book closes with a vision of its eternal destruction.

In contrast appear the humble and contrite spirits of the nation, who alone are to constitute the Zion which

is to be so glorious. This important feature of these closing chapters will be readily perceived upon even a rapid review of their contents.

The first part of chapter fifty-six is a continuation of the gracious promises of the preceding chapter, but at verse 9 a new subject begins. The land, the vineyard of the Lord, is seen invaded and down-trodden by the heathen, typified by the beasts of the field, on account of the sloth, covetousness, and selfishness of the shepherds, or leaders of the people. The righteous are dying out, but well is it for them that they are removed from the evil to come.¹ Then follows an old-time rebuke of the apostate race, which, having provoked God continually with its idolatry and estrangement of heart, is destined now to be swept away.² The humble and godly remnant shall survive, with the sublime assurance vouchsafed it that for its sake the evil days shall be shortened, and that it shall enter into peace.³

Still, there shall be no peace to the wicked. This thought leads the prophet to inveigh immediately against the deceitful religiousness of the nation. "Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins. Yet they seek God daily, and delight to know his ways, and take delight in approaching to God, as if they were a nation that did righteousness and forsook not the ordinance of their God."⁴ He then characterizes them as scrupulous in fasting, bowing their heads like bulrushes, and spreading sackcloth and ashes under them, all the while being guilty of every species of extortion and oppression of the poor.

The remainder of this chapter is full of promises to the people of true prosperity and safety if only they will

¹ Isa. lvii.

² Isa. lvii. 3-13.

³ Isa. lvii. 15.

⁴ Isa. lviii.

really choose the righteousness of God. Now that evil has come, they are not to be allowed to charge it upon God, and to complain of failure in the result of their close observance of his worship and fasts, because the Lord's hand is not shortened that it cannot save, but it is their iniquities which stand between them and their God.¹ After this follows a bitter and terrible arraignment of the whole generation of vipers, whose destruction, at the hand of the Lord, shall cause his name to be feared throughout the earth. Then shall the Redeemer come to his chosen ones, and make of them a glorious and abiding people to himself, when Zion shall be restored to far more than her pristine splendor. Now comes the most glowing picture of Zion's exaltation in all the earth, when kings and queens of the Gentiles shall vie with each other in rendering service to her and her children.²

In the next chapter, the sixty-third, the former evil element reappears, only to grow worse and worse. In a very bold and dramatic figure, under the form of a dialogue, God himself appears as a blood-stained champion, on his return from executing upon Edom the vengeance of the old controversy of Zion, so powerfully depicted in the thirty-fourth chapter.³

The portion from chapter lxiii. 7, through chapter lxiv., is cast in the form of a beautiful and touching ode, in which the trembling people remonstrate with God for having forsaken them, confess their sins, and pray him to remember his works of old for them, when he led them by the right hand of Moses. Still are they his people, and he is their Father. Why should they be cast off forever? Zion is a wilderness, Jerusalem a desolation. "Our holy and beautiful house, where our fathers praised thee, is burned up with fire; and all our pleasant things

¹ Isa. lix.

² Isa. lx., lxi., lxii.

³ Isa. lxiii. 1-6.

are laid waste. Wilt thou refrain thyself for these things, O Lord? Wilt thou hold thy peace, and afflict us very sore?" The immediate answer of Jehovah to this lament is certainly very remarkable.¹ To appreciate its meaning it should be quoted in full:

"I am sought of them that asked not for me; I am found of them that sought me not; I said, behold me, behold me, unto a nation that was not called by my name.

"I have spread out my hands all the day unto a rebellious people, which walketh in a way that was not good, after their own thoughts;

"A people that provoketh me to anger continually to my face; that sacrificeth in gardens, and burneth incense upon altars of brick;

"Which remain among the graves, and lodge in the monuments, which eat swine's flesh, and broth of abominable things is in their vessels;

"Which say, stand by thyself, come not near to me; for I am holier than thou. These are a smoke in my nose, a fire that burneth all the day.

"Behold, it is written before me: I will not keep silence, but will recompense, even recompense into their bosom,

"Your iniquities, and the iniquities of your fathers together, saith the Lord, which have burned incense upon the mountains, and blasphemed me upon the hills; therefore will I measure their former work into their bosom.

"Thus saith the Lord, as the new wine is found in the cluster, and one saith, destroy it not; for a blessing is in it: so will I do for my servants' sakes, that I may not destroy them all.

"And I will bring forth a seed out of Jacob, and out of Judah an inheritor of my mountains: and mine elect shall inherit it, and my servants shall dwell there.

"And Sharon shall be a fold of flocks, and the valley of Achor a place for the herds to lie down in, for my people that have sought me.

"But ye are they that forsake the Lord, that forget my holy mountain, that prepare a table for that troop, and that furnish the drink offering unto that number.

"Therefore will I number you to the sword, and ye shall all bow down to the slaughter: because when I called, ye did not answer; when I spake, ye did not hear; but did evil before mine eyes, and did choose that wherein I delighted not.

"Therefore thus saith the Lord God, behold, my servants shall eat, but ye shall be hungry: behold, my servants shall drink, but ye shall be thirsty: behold, my servants shall rejoice, but ye shall be ashamed:

“Behold, my servants shall sing for joy of heart, but ye shall cry for sorrow of heart, and shall howl for vexation of spirit.

“And ye shall leave your name for a curse unto my chosen : for the Lord God shall slay thee, and call his servants by another name :

“That he who blesseth himself in the earth shall bless himself in the God of truth ; and he that sweareth in the earth shall swear by the God of truth ; because the former troubles are forgotten, and because they are hid from mine eyes.”

Here we have a distinct separation, made by God himself, between his ancient nation, whom he rejects and casts off, and a new people, who never knew him nor were called by his name. The latter is now chosen to take the place of the former. The children of Israel had ever been rebellious and perverse, prone to every kind of offensive abomination, yet intolerably self-righteous, saying, “stand by thyself, come not near to me : for I am holier than thou.” Upon them, therefore, is to descend the judgment merited by all their generations of iniquity, to the utter destruction of the nation, but for its saving remnant, who are yet to inherit the blessing of the fathers. The major portion of Israel shall be driven forth to famine, to sorrow, and to slaughter. The true servants of God, who obey his invitation, shall be preserved, and shall inherit all the privileges of his care.

In verse 15 occur these wonderful words : “Ye shall leave your name for a curse unto my chosen, for Jehovah God shall slay thee, and call his servants by another name.” He himself shall be known in the earth under the title of the God of Truth—the Hebrew form for the True God—instead of, as heretofore, the God of Israel. “For behold I create new heavens and a new earth : and the former shall not be remembered nor come into mind.” And then we have given us another picture of the new Jerusalem, with the quotation from the eleventh chapter, to the effect that the whole earth shall become

the mountain of the Lord, wherein they shall not hurt nor destroy.

The prophecy closes in direct continuation of this strain.¹ There is, however, a strong excitement, and a rapid, constant change of scene in the sentences, which must be borne in mind, else the meaning will be in some places obscure. First, Jehovah asks why, since heaven is his throne and the earth his footstool, the people should think the temple worthy his consideration? No. It is rather to him who is of a poor and contrite spirit, and who trembleth at his word, that he will look. The various costly offerings of the hypocrites are each to him the one worse than the other, while the hypocrites reject his commands and do evil before his eyes.² At this point recur words which we may well ponder: "Hear the word of the Lord, ye that tremble at his word. Your brethren that hated you, that cast you out for my name's sake, said, Let the Lord be glorified: but he shall appear to your joy and they shall be ashamed. A voice of noise from the city! A voice from the temple! A voice of the Lord that rendereth recompense to his enemies!"³

In the midst of this tumult in city and temple, the hour of God's vengeance for the wrongs inflicted upon his servants by their wicked brethren on the plea of doing him service, Zion gives birth to a son, and a nation is born at once. The meaning is plain enough. Simultaneously with this judgment a new beginning of God's people takes place, with a marvellous suddenness, intimated by the figures employed. "Who hath heard such a thing? Who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? or shall a nation be born at once?"

Then follows an invitation to all who love Jerusalem

¹ Isa. lxvi.

² Isa. lxvi. 3, 4.

³ Isa. lxvi. 5, 6.

to rejoice with her because, in return for all the afflictions of his servants, the Lord promises to make her their happy mother, who will comfort and console them after their troubles. But against his enemies he will come with fire and with his chariots like a whirlwind of flame. By fire and by his sword will he plead with all flesh, and the slain of the Lord shall be many.¹

The great vision closes with the assembling of all nations and tongues to behold the glory of God. His messengers who have escaped from the day of recompense have declared his name and power to the uttermost parts of the earth, from every portion of which the children of Zion shall come up, at the last, to the holy mountain, to be priests and Levites unto God. The new heavens and the new earth shall abide. So shall God's people, under a new name, the former one having been changed. Then shall the worship and service of Jehovah be universal and unceasing in the world. The fearful figure of the unquenchable fire and the worm that dieth not denotes the eternal destruction of the wicked and apostate persecutors of God's chosen ones.

No one who reads the portion of which we have given this summary as he would any other composition, continuously, without the injurious break of chapter and verse, can avoid noticing that the whole aspect of the original subject, which begins at chapter xl., has changed. There the people of God appear as captives in Babylon, few in number and dispirited. Their deliverance by Cyrus, and restoration to rebuild the temple, is the great theme. Here it is Zion-Jerusalem, more than restored, created anew with a never-fading glory and universal sway. These do not come to her, however, until after a great conflict, although not with heathen conquerors and

¹ Isa. lxvi. 10-14.

oppressors. No mention is made of Assyria nor Babylon, nor of any external foe. The humble but true servants of God are exposed instead to the persecutions of the wicked among the Jews themselves, their brethren who cast them out on the plea of glorifying God. These are enemies of the Lord, who are to be visited with a more complete destruction than ever was received by the Chaldeans at the hand of Cyrus.

The whole interpretation turns upon the meaning of Zion-Jerusalem. According to the precise signification of this personification of the people of God in the mind of the writer will be the consequent application of the term.

One view is that it refers exclusively to the Jewish people, just as the first part of the prophecy, dealing with the times of Cyrus, refers alone to that period. On this interpretation, the wicked Jews against whom the prophet inveighs are those exiles in Babylon not yet purged from their old-time idolatry, when they sacrificed their children to Moloch, performed licentious rites in the groves, and defiled themselves by eating swine's flesh. Like their fathers under Hezekiah and Manasseh, they added to their other offences the most despicable hypocrisy, pretending to serve Jehovah with their lips, while their hearts and lives were far from him.

Against such characters the prophet's indignation was stirred, and while depicting the glories of the restoration he represents them as failing to share its joys, and as given over, instead, to destruction. The pious portion of the nation, on the contrary, who had abjured idolatry and the eating of swine's flesh, and who were scrupulous in keeping the Sabbath, are to form the nucleus of a great future kingdom, the capital of which shall be at Jerusalem. Then shall the wasted and forsaken Land of Promise be

filled with a righteous people, for whom the sons of the alien shall cultivate the soil, they themselves becoming priests of Jehovah. In this view, all the language concerning Zion's glory must be taken literally, in the sense, at least, of a purely Jewish Zion, visited by the greatest caravans from Arabia, and crowds of admiring Greeks from the west. The kings and queens of these nations, as in Solomon's days, would come to behold the splendor of the city, and would furnish, on their part, every means of returning to Palestine to the widely dispersed children of Israel.

The conclusive answer to this is that Zion-Jerusalem is identified repeatedly by the writer with the holy mountain of Jehovah, of which we have already heard in Micah and the first part of Isaiah. We hardly need go over the arguments which prove that that is not the small spot of earth once covered by the city of Jerusalem, which, at its greatest extent, did not equal the area of the Central Park in New York. It surely cannot be only in that confined space that the prophet again takes pains to tell us that "the wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock; and dust shall be the serpent's meat."¹ Rather is it the kingdom of God over which the Messiah is to reign, the chosen people who serve Jehovah in truth, conceived of as the glorified bride of the Lord, about which the prophet so rapturously speaks. In those days it is her sons who are to come to her solemn feasts from every region of an earth which shall be filled with the knowledge of Jehovah as the waters cover the sea.

Zion-Jerusalem, therefore, can be no other than the Church of God, whose long and weary conflict with a persecuting world is to terminate in a triumph which the

¹ Isa. lxv. 25.

prophet could describe only in the imagery of his times. Nevertheless, he does not leave us to understand this triumph as applying at any time to the Jews, because the great opposition to Zion comes from this very quarter, and the description is too unmistakable to admit of a doubt as to the reference.

The student perceives at once that these are not the Jews of the Jerusalem of Hezekiah's and Isaiah's day, who had the fear of Damascus and Samaria, of Tiglath Pileser or Sennacherib before their eyes. As has just been remarked, it is not Assyria, or Egypt, or Babylon which threatens Zion now, but an apostate serpent seed in Israel itself, which broods over viper's eggs, and weaves the spider's web. The references to idolatry are either retrospective, as coming from the children of those who always provoked Jehovah to his face, or figurative, expressing the most revolting impurity of heart, like the eating of swine's flesh. It is plainly stated that God is to choose instead a new people whom he had not known before, and of whom he was not known, in accordance with the prophecy which predicts that the Messiah shall call a nation which he knew not, and nations which knew him not shall run unto him.¹ This nation of his true servants is to be called by a new name, while self-righteous Israel, so graphically described as guilty of every abomination in the holy sight of God, assuming, at the same time, an exclusive holiness, is the rebellious people whose once honored name is to become a curse.

Most appropriately indeed does this prophecy follow in the succession of those contained in the latter half of Isaiah, which are so wonderfully fulfilled in the history of Christ and of his Church. After being told that he would be rejected and abhorred by the nation, and that

¹ Isa. lxx. ; lv. 5.

he would be unjustly tried and put to death, it remained for us to hear how his kingdom would rise from the grave itself, and in what manner the infant Church should be born. There must also be a forecast of the great tragedy of Israel, the fearful judgment which brought upon that evil generation a woe such as the world had never seen. In this passage the beginning of the separation between God's ancient people and his new is plainly foretold. How strangely has history confirmed its every word! The name of Christian has more than taken the place of that of Jew as a designation of the people of God. The one is now universally understood to mean those who humbly honor and serve the God of truth, and are his accepted servants and children. The other has long ago passed into a proverb, a byword, and a curse. Once the Pharisee drew his robes about him lest he be defiled by the approach of the despised Galilean, whom he counted accursed because he knew not the law. This same Pharisee has become the synonym through the ages of the most odious hypocrisy and cant, while kings have emulated each other in borrowing the name of the humble Galilean fishermen whereby to designate their courts.

How vividly also do the scenes of the great crisis pass before us in the last words of this vision! The temple, spoken of before as burned, and the city as desolate, are both now rebuilt, but the Lord regardeth them not. The many sacrifices offered there are increasingly hateful to him. Now, indeed, he comes to Edom, to the seat of the proud and scoffing Sadducee, to recompense those who in his name had cast out his chosen ones. In what a delusion were they found, and what a madness was sent upon them!

Then was witnessed the wonder and marvel of history. The destruction of Jerusalem set free the new church forever. Already, in one generation, Christianity had

grown so mighty a power in the world that but a few years before the Jewish catastrophe Tacitus says that the Christians constituted a vast multitude in Rome herself. No longer did the newly born Church need the fostering care of her native Judaism. With more than the strength of full age she went forth to conquer and prevail among the nations, until the strongest and the proudest yielded to her claims. Then it was that those who had escaped from the destruction which fell upon apostate Israel became the heralds of the glad tidings to all peoples. Their report has gone on ever since, and will do so, until the oft-promised day when all nations and tongues shall be gathered to the glorious feast at God's Holy Mountain.

CHAPTER IX.

THE PROPHECIES OF JEREMIAH.

No one of the long line of righteous men sent of old into a world of evil comes to us surrounded by so mournful an interest as does the prophet Jeremiah. In the prosperous security of our modern life, it is difficult for us to see, as in his case, why the way of the upright should be made so hard, and why nothing but affliction and darkness should await the true servant of God.

Endowed with an unusually sensitive nature, made to feel keenly and to suffer acutely, Jeremiah seemed born but to heart-aching disappointment, sorrow, and trial. With the warmest love for his native land and people, he saw both tend steadily towards utter ruin, made all the more bitter by the brief gleam of hope which came and went with the life of King Josiah. Passionately devoted to the religion of his fathers, with an unequalled insight into its pure spirituality, he could find nothing about him except the vilest apostasy, while all his efforts to stay the progress of corruption were worse than futile, only exposing him to repeated and cruel persecution. Finally, with his beloved city destroyed, and the temple burned, the aged prophet disappears from view, carried against his will in an ill-fated emigration to Egypt. Tradition tells us that there he met a prophet's death at the hands of his fellow-exiles, who stoned him, exasperated at his continued denunciations of their idolatry. His wonderful Lament after the fall of the city is unsurpassed in any literature for pathos and varied expression of grief,

and testifies touchingly to the abiding sadness of his life.

On the other hand, we have no brighter proof that God's servants are chosen, never bought. A lifelong suffering in the cause of his God did not affect his faith or trust for a moment. High must be his award from the Master he served so faithfully, who himself, as the Man of Sorrows, was by many taken to be Jeremiah returned again to earth.¹

The pressing nature of the evils which he encountered, and the near prospect of destruction, caused his thoughts to be almost exclusively occupied with the fate of his people. There are times when the contemplation of the present absorbs one's whole being, so that the future, however well assured, can yet have little place. On this account Jeremiah's views of the consolation of Israel are relatively fewer than those in Isaiah. Yet, interspersed through the long, sorrowful record of his utterances, occur many presages of the great salvation to come, marked by that deep spirituality to which we have referred, joined to the high conception of good for all men and nations, proving that the same Divine Spirit unifies the word of all the prophets.

In illustration we cite the following verses :

“Turn, O backsliding children, saith the Lord ; for I am married unto you : and I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion :

“And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding.

“And it shall come to pass, when ye be multiplied and increased in the land, in those days, saith the Lord, they shall say no more, The ark of the covenant of the Lord : neither shall it come to mind : neither shall they remember it ; neither shall they visit it ; neither shall that be done any more.”²

¹ Matt. xvi. 14.

² Jer. iii. 14-17.

The central thought of these verses is characteristic of Jeremiah. He recurs to it more fully in subsequent passages. It is, that in the times of the Messiah, a new covenant will be made by God which will do away altogether with the Mosaic law, substituting for its ordinances a spiritual law, written, not upon tablets of stone, but upon the tables of living hearts. It should be premised that a "family" among the Hebrews meant, as among the Arabs, a clan, or tribal division, which might contain a larger number of people than a city. The idea is, that few would survive to begin anew the Israel of the future. In those days God would provide for the dwellers in Zion-Jerusalem teachers after his own heart, who should instruct them with a new knowledge and understanding, which should cause them to forget the ark of the covenant altogether: they would not speak of it, neither would they remember it.

Nothing can express more strongly than these words the idea that under the Messiah the whole Mosaic economy was destined to give place to one so far superior to it, that the old should be swept away and forgotten. In the ritual of Moses, the ark of the covenant formed a most august symbol. With the mercy-seat between the cherubim, and the Shechinah, the visible token of the Divine Presence, above the tables of the law within, it represented the whole dispensation under which the ancient Church lived.

That the superiority of the new law should consist in its resting-place being that inner chamber of the human heart, the conscience, rather than in a recess in a temple made with hands, is expressed again in the vision of the great restoration, when the children of Israel shall return from their long wandering, and "serve the Lord their God, and David their king whom I will raise up to them."¹ The prophet continues in these words:

¹ Jer. xxx. 9.

“Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah :

“Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt ; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord :

“But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel ; after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts ; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.

“And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord : for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord : for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.”¹

By the side of a purified and spiritual Israel, however, all the nations of earth are to share in the blessing of the true knowledge and understanding of God, which leads to a renewed being. Jeremiah, in his own way, also reaches the great congregation at the Mount of the Lord, seen by Micah and Isaiah, where all peoples shall be gathered unto it, never to walk again after the imagination of the heart, which by nature tends only to evil.² We have already commented upon the faith shown by the above mentioned prophets in their predictions regarding the world-wide extension of Jehovah-worship, although in their day they could see nothing but a diminishing number of his worshippers. We have also adverted to their unexampled kindness of spirit towards the alien, at a time when it was at the hands of foreigners that they and their land were suffering from cruelties the most wanton. But living, as Jeremiah did, at the consummation of the ruin, when the light of Zion seemed about to be quenched forever, leaving Jehovah, to all human appearance, without habitation or name, it is wonderful indeed to find the same faith and the same spirit shining through the beautiful words wherein he actually comforts his wearied

¹ Jer. xxxi. 31-34.

² Jer. iii. 17.

heart with the thought of the future conversion of the savage heathen :

“O Lord, my strength, and my fortress, and my refuge in the day of affliction, the Gentiles shall come unto thee from the ends of the earth, and shall say, Surely our fathers have inherited lies, vanity, and things wherein there is no profit.

“Shall a man make gods unto himself, and they are no gods?

“Therefore, behold, I will this once cause them to know mine hand and my might; and they shall know that my name is The Lord.”¹

Some philosophers tell us that men are products of their times, even of their climate, soil, and food. Are we, then, to ascribe the production of a spirit like that of Jeremiah to his age and country? No writer of antiquity, sacred or profane, tells us so much about himself and his personal experiences, and gives us such an amount of information in regard to his contemporaries. Read critically, it is plainly seen, in his literary style, in his many figures and illustrations, and in his incidental allusions and reflections, that he belongs, truly enough, to a nation in its decadence, that he uses a decaying language, and that here is a man who had never travelled far beyond the narrow limits of his desolated land. How and where did he become imbued with sentiments like those which led him to prophesy in reality?

Let it never be lost sight of that our argument is not based upon the coincidences which we can show between the *words* of the prophets and subsequent history, striking as these may be. It is true, as the prophets said, that the Gentile nations have resorted to the God of Zion-Jerusalem with the foretold confession on their lips of the utter nothingness of their Jupiters and Apollos, notwithstanding all that genius had so wondrously built, and carved, and sung to their honor and power. But whence came that other coincidence, not in word, but in spirit, of an

¹ Jer. xvi. 19-21.

era of advancing moral growth, on account of which the God of Zion should be worshipped the world over; when love, and peace, and the complete transformation of man's originally evil nature should find its expression in an harmonious gathering of every family from every land on earth? Did either the Jerusalem or the Babylon of that age suggest such an anticipation or inspire such a sentiment?

How much higher, also, is the prophet's conception of the work of the Messiah than that inspired by ordinary religiousness! To cling to the worship of the fathers is the first, often the only, thought of the devotee. The strictest conservatism is his holiest duty. Nothing could have been further outside the mind or wishes of the Rabbi than the displacement of the Law of Moses in Zion, with the result of the incoming of the Gentile multitude. We recognize also, in the words concerning a world blessed with the reign of inner law, the kingdom of Him who, said Isaiah, would not judge after the sight of the eyes, nor reprove according to the hearing of the ears, but alone according to the thoughts of the heart.

Living when his own eyes witnessed the cutting down of the house of David, it is not wonderful that the simile of Isaiah of a tree plant which should grow out of the hidden root of Jesse should be also used by Jeremiah in designation of the Messiah.¹ But he added a name of his own giving, which testifies still further to the Messiah's true relation to the kingdom of God. At the close of chapter xxii. he indites a prophecy which evidently wrings his very heart, as he sees the unhappy king of David's line carried away captive to Babylon:

"O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the Lord. Thus saith the

¹ Isa. xi.

Lord. Write ye this man childless, a man that shall not prosper in his days : for no man of his seed shall prosper, sitting upon the throne of David, and ruling any more in Judah."

Then, after a glance at the unfaithful leaders of the people who accompanied the banished king, and who were mainly responsible for the ruin of the kingdom, he turns to the restoration, and recalls the advent of the Branch, foretold by Isaiah.¹

The title he uses, "the Lord our Righteousness," has to the full as much meaning as that used by the earlier prophet. The "Branch" implied the fall and ruin of the earthly kingdom of David, followed by the new beginning under the Messiah. "The Lord our Righteousness" implies no less than the Messiah's divine nature, and its importance to men.

Many interpreters endeavor to evade the force of this meaning by classing the title with the compounds of the name of God common in Hebrew proper names, as in Elijah, Elisha, Jeremiah, Jeconiah, etc. But this is not a compound name, and never can be made such. The grammatical construction demands that it should be read as a sentence: *i. e.*, he should be called Lord, because he is Lord, just as Isaiah says, he shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Prince of Peace.² The prophet's evident design here is to imply that the Messiah shall be, or shall bring, righteousness to us; and this, it must be owned, is an eminently Christian conception. Even if he mean only that our righteousness comes from God, and not from ourselves, he still stands upon the plane of the Christian idea, that which distinguishes this religion from all others in the world. According to the teaching of the New Testament, righteousness is no native product of the human heart; neither is it to be attained

¹ Jer. xxiii. 5, 6.

² Isa. ix. 6.

unto by simple human effort. It must come from a nature freely good, spontaneously, as a good tree produces good fruit. If poor, sinful, perverted human nature be ever to live in the air of heaven, in that new spiritual realm wherein dwelleth righteousness, the Lord must come, who can renew the heart, and by giving his own nature impart also his righteousness.

CHAPTER X.

THE BOOK OF DANIEL.

No one can begin to read the Book of Daniel without soon becoming aware that it reflects a great external change from its predecessors in the Old Testament. As far as such change illustrates differences in time and place, it corresponds strictly with the requirements of the case. Daniel lived as much apart from Palestine as a Hindoo in the employment of the Foreign Office at London would live away from the surroundings of India. He belonged to a wholly different world from that of Amos or Isaiah. He lived, not only in another land, but in another time, and therefore his imagery, and mental habits of suggestion, as well as his expressions, are different.

To be natural, Daniel should show himself a Babylonian in style and manner. This involves as great a contrast to the former ages of Hebrew history as we find in individuals, after leaving the guarded training of home and experiencing the education of the world. No one could have foretold, before the Hebrew was removed from his ancient isolated land, that he would be transformed into the historical, widely dispersed Jew. Jeremiah, who closed the line of the old prophets, had no idea of the great change which would take place in his race subsequent to its sojourn in Babylon. After the Captivity, the Jew no more reverted to the ancient Hebrew, than the man of business reverts to the boy of the farm or household. It is true that Zechariah and Malachi,

after the restoration under Zerubbabel, kept up a dying echo of the old times, but their imitations of ancient prophecy only serve to illustrate the familiar phenomenon of spasmodic revivals in all decaying literatures. Daniel belongs entirely to the Jewish, in distinction from the Hebrew, world, and shows that altered phase of thought and action which continued to characterize the nation until the times of Christ; a change unsurpassed in history for its completeness, modifying the whole mental, social, and religious characteristics of the people.

The associates of the ancient Hebrew were the numerous petty independent tribes of Moab, Ammon, Philistia, and Syria, with their territorial religions and deities. The conquest of Nebuchadnezzar finally established the imperial, instead of the old tribal system, throughout western Asia. This change wrought an abiding modification in the conceptions of the conquered. The Jew learned to look out upon the world; he no longer made use of the phrase "from Dan even unto Beersheba." He witnessed the overthrow of the great Chaldean realm, and the establishment of the vast Medo-Persian empire in its place. Under the Persian rule, he first became acquainted with the ideas of theology, heresy, and sect, as these words are now understood in the Christian and Mohammedan worlds. For the Persians had a true theological system, based upon philosophical and metaphysical doctrines, which bore resemblance neither to the Shemitic heathenism of Nineveh, Babylon, and Sidon, nor to the milder paganism of Greece. Instead, true prototypes of the modern Moslems, they despised and insulted the religious sentiment of the Babylonians and Egyptians, treating their idols with the same want of consideration which they afterwards displayed towards the most venerated shrines of the Greeks. Meanwhile, it is evident that the religious

system of Persia bore within itself those elements of dispute and schism which have characterized all true theologies of history. In a very few years after the exchange of the domination of the Chaldean for that of the Persian, the Jew found idolatry wholly discredited, and a new world of religious ideas and discussions opened to him in the struggles between the Magian and the anti-Magian schools of Persian doctrine.

The Christian readily recognizes that these historic facts formed a most important means of education, ordered by God, for his ancient people, to prepare them for their future world-wide work. While the Persian influence served to eradicate in them any further inclination to paganism, it could do no more. It never succeeded in substituting dualism in the place of monotheism. The Jew ever afterwards remained faithful to the doctrine of the one only true God.

A Jewish prophet of that period, therefore, would present scarcely any of the old time local coloring. His field of view would be, rather, over great and wide empires. His imagery would be drawn from the scenes of Mesopotamia and Susiana, and would show that a different world of thought suggested its most characteristic features. All these requirements are met in the book of Daniel. In no other book is there a more faithful correspondence to the circumstances of its locality. In its social characteristics, also, it belongs to the men of that age and country. This becomes the more established, in proportion as modern explorations make us better acquainted with the times of Nebuchadnezzar and of Cyrus. Its language, partly Hebrew and partly Aramaic, illustrates the change beginning at that time, which made Hebrew a dead scholastic language in the time of Christ. More than this. The whole manner of prophecy is modified. With Daniel

it is no longer the "word of the Lord," coming to the prophet by an unexplained suggestion or inspiration. It consists of a series of dreams and visions, which are described throughout, not in poetic terms, but in the formal style of prose narrative.

This last feature forces uncompromisingly the issue of the authenticity of the book. If its author were indeed the Daniel who stood before Nebuchadnezzar, the miraculous fact of prophecy is established beyond gainsaying, because the book contains distinct statements of great historical events which no mere man could have foreseen in Daniel's lifetime. The controversy has grown to such proportions that it is impracticable for us, under present limitations, to discuss it with any fulness. Besides, nowhere is the unfortunate influence of preconceived views or principles on the judgment so apparent as here. The mind is not allowed to deal with the simple facts of the case, lest the conclusions prove too inadmissible on other grounds. This is the cause of a divergence between the two parties, so fundamental that the one side regards as a most fatal objection to the reasoning of its opponents that which the other adduces as one of its most forcible arguments.

Under these circumstances, we have concluded to discuss the Messianic predictions in the Book of Daniel apart altogether from questions of date and authorship, until the plain intent of these passages can be determined. The absence in the book of all attempt at poetic dress or embellishment makes the task quite easy. After this, we can properly compare the interpretation which refers the prophecies to the advent of Jesus Christ and the founding of his Church with other interpretations which have been maintained instead.

We begin with the double prediction of the four great

world empires, which forms the subject of two distinct visions—that of the image in Nebuchadnezzar's dream, and Daniel's own vision of the four great beasts.¹ Scholars universally admit, however widely they may disagree in their exposition, that the two passages present only different aspects of the same theme.

The appearance of the image in Nebuchadnezzar's dream, and the significance of its divers parts, is detailed with the greatest possible clearness in the following passage:²

“Thou, O king, sawest, and behold a great image. This great image, whose brightness was excellent, stood before thee; and the form thereof was terrible.

“This image's head was of fine gold, his breasts and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass,

“His legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay.

“Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces.

“Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like chaff of the summer threshing-floors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.

“This is the dream; and we will tell the interpretation thereof before the king.

“Thou, O king, art a king of kings: for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory.

“And wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the heaven hath he given into thine hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all. Thou art this head of gold.

“And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee, and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth.

“And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things: and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise.

“And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potters' clay, and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; but there shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay.

¹ Dan. ii. ; vii.

² Dan. ii. 31-45.

“And as the toes of the feet were part of iron, and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken.

“And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay.

“And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever.

“Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure.”

Nothing could be more natural, or more in accordance with the laws of suggestion in dreams, than this Babylonian vision of the night. Colossal images, solitary and silent in great plains, are a most awe-inspiring sight. Any traveller, looking up at the head of the great Sphinx in Egypt, particularly in the deepening twilight, may prove this to himself. An image, also, meant to convey a typical significance, rather than to copy any one living form, is in keeping with Assyrian or Babylonian art. The mind of the dreamer, on waking, would be filled with much greater solicitude to understand the import of such a dream, than if it had been of any other kind of object. As the bull, man-headed and winged, expressed to the Ninevite the intelligence, swiftness, and strength of his king, so would this image terrify the sleeper with its portent, as well as with its unearthly size and form. How much like one of the inexplicable changes of a dream, also, is the Stone, coming by unseen power to smite the Colossus, and then growing into a world-wide mountain!

When from the dream we pass to the prophet's interpretation, it is difficult to see how there can be any difference of opinion in regard to his intention. The head of

gold is fully described as the kingdom ruled over by Nebuchadnezzar, which, in distinction from that of Solomon, or Pharaoh, or any other kingdom familiar to the minds of previous epochs, was co-extensive with the civilized world as it was then regarded: a universal monarchy, in fact.¹ This verse is important because it defines the conception pertaining equally to the four parts of the image. Neither of these can be interpreted as individual kings succeeding one another on the same throne, but alone as kingdoms of like universal sway with the first, while each is still wholly distinct in origin and kind from its predecessor, because composed of different material. In keeping with this idea, the next verse, referring to the third kingdom, says that "it shall bear rule over all the earth."

From the clearly expressed idea of world-embracing empires, we turn to the respective characteristics of each of the four, symbolized by the metals of which each part of the image was composed. Here we are met by a series of contrasts, which, the prophet takes great pains to explain, convey the chief meaning of the vision, especially in the case of the last. In gold we have the most showy, but the least effective of the metals. As a type of simple magnificence this golden head fitly embodied the imposing nature of the Babylonian monarchy. In it, with its capital city, the greatest by far yet seen on earth, the Oriental conception of kingly glory reached its culminating point.

The succeeding kingdom is also of a showy metal, but inferior to the former in external appearance. The third presents a still further decline from the splendor of the first, but is composed of stronger material than either of its predecessors.²

With the last of the four the contrast is complete. Iron

¹ Dan. ii. 38.

² Dan. ii. 39.

is the very antithesis of gold. It possesses no glitter with which to impress the imagination, shining only in the dread gleam of the sword. The one idea conveyed by it is that of strength and conquering might. So completely is this idea designed to be carried out in regard to the last kingdom, that the prophet dwells longer upon the explanation of these inherent qualities than he does upon the characteristics of all the other three together. It is futile, therefore, to deny that he meant to describe this fourth kingdom as far excelling them all in power and thoroughness of world conquest, and to contrast it with them in respect of its superior military force and destructiveness. "Forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things, and as iron that breaketh all these [metals], shall it break in pieces and bruise!"

According to every principle of natural exposition, also, the difference in metal, or composition, implies corresponding specific difference in origin and race. The gold does not pass into the silver, nor this into the bronze, nor the bronze into the iron. The first sign of intermixture occurs in the feet, or last portion of the iron kingdom, and there only. As the succession of the different parts of the image signifies a succession in time, it follows that it is the fourth kingdom alone which would show a change in its material, by incorporating in itself, during the last days of its continuance, the inferior clay of the earth which it had subdued, losing thereby the old iron hardness which had crushed the world, and retaining nothing but the strength of the original form of the empire.

In keeping still with the succession of events comes the fifth kingdom, set up by the God of heaven. It appears during, not after, the dominion of the iron kingdom, at the time when this, having subdued the world, had already entered upon its course of intermixture with those less

powerful elements which eventually compassed its downfall. This fact is clearly expressed in the thirty-fourth and forty-fourth verses. The Kingdom of Heaven, in distinction from all these earthly kingdoms, is, neither in its beginning nor in its progress, the work of men's hands. It is the abiding and ever extending kingdom, which, after crushing to powder the preceding empires of force, finally becomes the mountain filling the whole earth.¹

From the interpretation of the dream given by Daniel, we pass to its exposition. If one were asked to name the world empires succeeding each other in history from the days of Nebuchadnezzar, without conscious reference to prophecy, the answer would be given unhesitatingly that there had been four: the Babylonian, the Medo-Persian, the Macedonian, and the Roman. There was no room for an intermediate rule which for a moment could be considered a power to rank with them in consequence. Each represented not only the domination of a distinct race and civilization, but each, in immediate succession, marked a particular and special epoch in historical development. The Persian monarchy succeeded the Babylonian, and, in so doing, supplanted it as distinctly as one geological stratum overlies another, which former may in time be covered by an entirely new layer, differing from both in type and character. No less radical was the change which, through the Macedonian conquest, overspread the countries acknowledging the Persian rule. Greek language and literature, architecture and religion, all the characteristics, in short, of Grecian life, appeared in the same countries, with the same obliterating effect upon the manners and customs of the Persian period.

To this succeeded the great Roman Empire, bringing a more thorough and enduring supremacy than any previ-

¹ Compare Micah iv. 13 and Isa. xi. 9.

ous. Compared with the three preceding, this fourth power was infinitely stronger and more formidable, having absolutely no successor nor parallel in these respects in history. However great and powerful other empires have been since, not one has risen to anything approaching the solitary commanding position held by Rome over a conquered world during many centuries. She won her empire through long and bloody struggles, crushing and continuing to crush until finally, from Britain to the Euphrates, from the Baltic to the Sahara, she had levelled to the dust every independent nation, great or small.

No substance can describe as well as iron the two great qualities of Roman rule, hardness and strength; constantly illustrated by its terrible effectiveness, tenacity, and cohesion. There is something very impressive in the manner in which Rome first patiently beat down all opposition, and then welded her conquests into a homogeneous whole. Europeans, Africans, and Asiatics became thoroughly incorporated together, so that, in the end, a Goth, a Greek, a Syrian, or an Arab mounted the throne of the Cæsars, without a thought of his being other than a true Roman. In this respect she stands alone in history. Other conquering races held their dominion to themselves to the last. Rome gradually merged herself into the whole world she had subjugated, losing by this something of the old force, yet retaining enough of its moulding principle to perpetuate her name and her impress long after little was left of the original iron which "subdueth all things."

The striking correspondence to historical fact becomes plainer the more closely we study the contrasts between the different metals composing the image of the dream. Gold and silver represent Asiatic types of dominion; bronze and iron, European. To the mind of the former,

the studied plainness of European power has always been a mystery. It was impossible for the Persians to comprehend how any one could recognize, in Agesilaus, a king of renowned Sparta. The Emperor, calling himself simply the first citizen of Rome, was removed an infinite distance from any Oriental conception of the mightiest of earthly potentates. The least powerful Eastern ruler affects, in his titles and surroundings, a display regarded by the Western mind with the contempt always felt by conscious inherent strength towards showy weakness.

Compared successively, also, the Persian monarchy shows a distinct inferiority to its predecessor in these very Asiatic elements of external glory. It greatly resembled the modern Turkish empire, only, without a Constantinople; for it had no great capital city, no wonderful Nineveh nor Babylon. Like the Turkish, this empire was divided into provinces ruled by satraps. These bore the same relation to the central authority as do the pashas in their pashaliks to the sultan. Like the Turks, again, the Persians built nothing, made no roads, founded no great cities, set on foot no internal improvements in their provinces. Instead, they gradually impoverished and ruined the countries which they ruled, so that the small but well-disciplined army of Alexander marched over them as easily as a modern British detachment disposes of a great Indian host.

From the earliest Hellenic song, that which inspired Alexander throughout his career, we find the title of "the brazen-clad" constantly applied to the Greeks. Such was that army which swiftly extended its conquests to the very borders of India. No one can read the narrative of Alexander's campaigns without noting the instructive illustration afforded by it of the new epoch in history, when Europe first began her long domination over Asia.

For ages it had been Asia—with Egypt—which alone had invented, built, discovered, taught, and conquered, while Europe was but a collection of rude and warring tribes. Now the marvellous combination of strength and discipline, which was ever afterwards to characterize Western power, for the first time made itself felt. Alexander's kingdom, and that of his successors, relatively to Oriental splendor, was too European in its spirit to be more than that which bronze is to silver. In effective strength, it soon cut through every Asiatic barrier to its progress.

This empire was, however, in these respects, but a foretaste of mighty Rome. Hers was truly an iron rule. Never again will the world witness such a crushing destroyer of nations and peoples. Gibbon, whom no one will accuse of inclination to favor the claims of biblical prophecy, yet, in view of the correspondence of this figure to the facts of history, is constrained to say, "The arms of the republic, sometimes vanquished in battle, always victorious in war, advanced with rapid steps to the Euphrates, the Danube, the Rhine, and the ocean; and the images of gold, or silver, or brass, that might serve to represent the nations and their kings, were successively broken by the iron monarchy of Rome."¹

Meanwhile, the traditions of the race caused the empire to affect the outward simplicity of the old republic. It was not until Constantine removed the capital to Byzantium that the emperors assumed the state and display of kings. At that time the slow, organic change, begun even as far back as under the first emperor, became complete. Already, during the reign of Augustus, the ranks of the legions were but in part composed of Roman soldiers: the privilege of Roman citizenship was already shared by Gaul, Greek, and Jew. Later, this ceased altogether to be

¹ "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire," p. 642, Lond. ed. 1830.

a privilege, owing to its cheapness. The Emperor Caracalla signalized the consummation of the work of absorption by the decree which converted all the motley populations of the empire into Roman citizens. It seems strange to us to find the enervated peoples of Egypt, Syria, and Byzantium uniformly called Romans in the Koran and in Mohammedan literature, and to hear the Turkish sultan style himself in his firmans the Roman Cæsar, on account of his succession to the city and throne of Constantine. History thus illustrates the singular merging of the Roman power and name into the totally dissimilar elements of the weak and mongrel inhabitants of Asia, who helplessly succumbed before the sword of the Saracen.

When we consider the Messianic portion of this prophetic vision, we find that it represents the small beginning of a heavenly kingdom during the later days of the iron empire. It is at first only like David's single stone, which, directed by God, brought the giant to the earth. That it is cut out of the mountain without hands, and yet strikes the image with so much power, impressively indicates the fact of its heavenly origin and nature, and that it prevailed by its own inherent principle, using wholly different means from those used in their conquests by the kingdoms of the world, which it is destined finally to supplant. Moreover, it is the kingdom which shall never come to an end. It shall increase from age to age until it fills the whole earth.

No one denies that the relation of history to Christianity, from the times of Nebuchadnezzar to those of Constantine, presents a continuous parallel to the terms of this prophecy. The only dispute is as to whether the author of the book of Daniel had or had not any intention of the kind; whether, therefore, these correspon-

dences are the result of prophecy or of chance. In history, we find just such a succession of four world empires, and no others, each bringing in the dominion of one distinct race, its language, laws, religion, and institutions. Each is most accurately represented by the contrasts in the metals, fully described in the prophet's interpretation of the different parts of the image. No one, also, can call in question the remarkable correspondence between the unique facts of later Roman history and the simile of pristine iron incorporating into itself the common clay of earth. Nor can it be denied that Christianity began to make itself known in the time of the fourth empire in just such an inexplicable way, until, though without a single human resource, it smote the great kingdom to the dust, and still survives to continue its career of world-conquest.

We compare now with these parallels the efforts at interpretation of those who cannot accept in this vision a conscious reference either to Rome or to Christianity by a writer of Daniel's time, nor, indeed, of four centuries later. The most common view taken by writers of this school is that the third kingdom is the empire founded by Alexander the Great during his brief twelve years of war: while the fourth kingdom, of iron, is that of his successors, especially in Syria and Egypt, the Seleucidæ of Antioch, and the Ptolemies of Alexandria: "the legs and feet being symbols of that intermingled and confused empire which sprung up under the Grecian chiefs who finally succeeded him." The intermixture of clay in the feet and toes of the image is made to refer to matrimonial alliances entered into between the Macedonian princes and members of subjugated nations. It is remarked, however, that "while the object of such alliances was union, or at least a design to bring about a peaceable

state of things, that object was, in a peculiar manner, defeated."

This mode of interpretation predicates the strangest confusion in the mind of the writer of Daniel in choosing his figures. He is made to assume that the kingdom of Alexander would be one, and the several kingdoms constituted by his generals out of his empire another *one* kingdom, wholly diverse from his, made up of quite other and stronger material, inherently far more powerful and formidable, crushing his bronze, as well as the earlier silver and gold, and finally becoming weak only by unfortunate matrimonial alliances!

One of the arguments chiefly relied upon here is that the two iron feet correspond to the two kingdoms of Egypt and Syria, with which the Jews had chiefly to deal, and that, therefore, the kingdom of the God of heaven was the revived Jewish state under the Maccabees. If this be so, to what did the two thighs of bronze in Alexander's portion of the image correspond?

As a matter of history, Alexander's empire was divided into four, not into two kingdoms; namely, Macedon and Greece under Cassander, Thrace and Bithynia under Ly-simachus, Syria under Seleucus, and Egypt under Ptolemy. This, moreover, is the plain understanding in regard to Alexander's empire on the part of the prophet himself. After describing the vision of the overthrow of the two-horned ram by the one-horned he-goat from the west, he is told, "The ram which thou sawest having two horns are the kings of Media and Persia, and the rough goat is the king of Grecia, and the great horn that is between his eyes is the first king. Now, that being broken, whereas four stood up for it, four kingdoms shall stand up out of the nation, but not in his power."¹ Here is certainly

¹ Dan. viii. 20-22.

no hint that the kingdoms of Alexander's successors were different in kind or nationality from his, still less that they were stronger, either singly or united. Indeed, the reverse is plainly stated. Who, in those days, would consider the divided kingdoms of Syria and Egypt of such invincible texture that they could be said to be "strong as iron, and as iron break in pieces every other kingdom"?

Granting that the author of the book of Daniel belonged to the Maccabean period, what motive could he have had in representing the kingdom of Antiochus Epiphanes under such a figure, and in such language? This king, in his youth, was a hostage in Rome, and throughout his life was forced to bow to Roman supremacy as completely as the tributary Indian princes now acknowledge the supremacy of England.¹

Such exegesis demands that the author should consider a small part of a divided empire greater than the whole. It is as incredible that any writer of that age should regard the fragments of the kingdom of the mighty Macedonian conqueror as in any sense surpassing that kingdom itself in power, as it would be that a modern historian should regard the Spain of our day as stronger than the original empire of Charles the Fifth. The assumption, too, that matrimonial alliances were a source of weakness to the Seleucidæ or the Ptolemies is wholly gratuitous. Where are the historical facts on which this theory is based? The Persians and Babylonians were not especially given to intermarrying; was this so in regard to the Macedonians? Or, again, reverting to the image, were the kingdoms of the Ptolemies and the Seleucidæ made of iron, and those of Bithynia and of Macedon herself composed only of bronze?

It seems to be overlooked, in this interpretation of the

¹ 1 Macc. i. 10.

parts of the image, that, from the necessities of the case, the last empire must correspond to the feet, when the preceding empires had appropriated the other portions of the body, and that the division into two, therefore, implies nothing more than the inevitable completion of any human figure, or semblance of one. If the author meant to represent four empires successive in time—which all admit—the last would be apportioned to the two lower extremities, as a matter of course. The unity of each, in this case, would be of material and of kind, not of parts. This, the author takes great pains to explain, is the chief purport of the vision. Otherwise, the two arms of the Persian period must be explained as distinct from the silver thorax, and the two brazen thighs of Alexander's kingdom as distinct from the brazen abdomen. We leave it to the judgment of the reader whether, by this time, it is the empires or the interpretations which appear the most "intermingled and confused."

The same subject of the four successive great empires is presented again under different imagery.¹ The prophet beholds the arena of the world under the guise of a vast troubled sea, from which comes up first a lion-like figure with eagle's wings. After a time it loses its wings, and has its disposition changed into something more human. We readily recognize this symbol of the Babylonian empire, which rose rapidly to power under Nebopolassar and his greater son Nebuchadnezzar. Later, it suddenly ceased its conquests, and became the wonder of the world on account of its vast public works and unbounded luxury.

The second appearance was that of a beast like unto a ravenous bear. Rising from the water, three ribs wrenched from his prey are seen in his mouth. After he has consumed these, he is told still to go on and devour much

¹ Dan. vii.

flesh. This striking vision applies naturally to the empire of Cyrus, not only in respect to the succession in time, but also because of its conformity to the facts of history. Cyrus first subdued Media, then Lydia—the kingdom of Croesus—and then Babylonia. Subsequently Egypt was conquered by his son Cambyses, and after that, under Darius and Xerxes, the Persians collected the greatest armies on record, only, however, to be led to slaughter and destruction on a gigantic scale hitherto unknown. As already remarked, the Persian rule was redeemed by no development of real civilization. To the last, it resembled the low ferocity of the bear, in its brutal and degrading despotism.

The third kingdom is represented in this vision by a leopard, winged and four-headed. This creature is distinguished by the suddenness and celerity of its bound or spring, which is greater in the distance cleared than that of either lion or tiger. In both form and appearance he is the most beautiful and graceful of all beasts of prey, while by none is he surpassed in fierceness and courage. Here, as if to mark the unexpected advent and unprecedented swiftness of the conquests of this kingdom, even the leopard's agility is supplemented by four wings.

No one can doubt the applicability of this figure to the Macedonian empire, even if this be not admitted in the case of the third kingdom, of bronze, in Nebuchadnezzar's image. The great Macedonian died at the early age of thirty-two, after having passed from the shores of the Adriatic to the Indus, and from the Oxus to the Nile. His quick, and yet real, conquests have never been paralleled. Though but partially Greek in blood, he embodied the ideal Homeric hero in his imposing personal appearance, and in the innate ferocity of his disposition. He was a true Greek in his admiration of manly beauty—so

detesting the opposite that, in imitation of Achilles, he dragged the brave, ill-favored Borgeas of Askelon to a cruel death at his chariot-wheel, sparing the life of the Indian king Porus solely on account of his kingly form and bearing.

It would be difficult to choose more effective symbols for contrast than that between the heavy, clumsy Persian bear and his agile Greek antagonist—a contrast complete because it bears out so perfectly the mental and moral characteristics of the two races. The versatile Greek has left an abiding impress of his fine sense of proportion and beauty in architecture and literature. The vast Medo-Persian empire produced nothing, to mark its long continuance, either in monuments or letters, not even a native historian.

The four heads of the leopard have with reason been supposed to mean the ultimate division of Alexander's empire into the four Macedonian kingdoms already mentioned. They were as truly Macedonian as the whole empire would have been, had Alexander's son lived to mount the throne of his father. They cannot be said to have supplanted that monarchy, as Alexander did that of Medo-Persia, because, in their own estimation and that of their contemporaries, they stood as simple divisions of the one Greco-Macedonian sovereignty.

It is evident that to the mind of the writer of the eighth chapter of Daniel the four kingdoms founded by Alexander's generals appear as surely Greek as his own, derived from one and the same nationality, only inferior in power to their great prototype. With these facts in view, we return to the remarkable termination of the Great Vision.

“After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it de-

youred and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it : and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it ; and it had ten horns.

“ I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots : and, behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking great things.

“ I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool : his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire.

“ A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him : thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him : the judgement was set, and the books were opened.

“ I beheld then, because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake : I beheld even till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame.

“ As concerning the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away : yet their lives were prolonged for a season and time.

“ I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him.

“ And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him : his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.

“ I Daniel was grieved in my spirit in the midst of my body, and the visions of my head troubled me.

“ I came near unto one of them that stood by, and asked him the truth of all this. So he told me, and made me know the interpretation of the things.

“ These great beasts, which are four, are four kings, which shall arise out of the earth.

“ But the saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever.

“ Then I would know the truth of the fourth beast, which was diverse from all the others, exceeding dreadful, whose teeth were of iron, and his nails of brass ; which devoured, brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with his feet ;

“ And of the ten horns that were in his head, and of the other which came up, and before whom three fell ; even of that horn that had eyes, and a mouth that spake very great things, whose look was more stout than his fellows.

“ I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them ;

“Until the Ancient of days came, and judgement was given to the saints of the Most High ; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom.

“Thus he said, The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces.

“And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise : and another shall rise after them ; and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings.

“And he shall speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and think to change times and laws : and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time.

“But the judgement shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end.

“And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.”¹

The first feature to note in regard to this fourth empire is the formidableness of its power.² No expositor of any school denies that this description of the fourth beast is intended to bear out and illustrate the character and qualities of the fourth kingdom of iron in the vision of Nebuchadnezzar's image. It is the strong iron which breaks in pieces and bruises all other things.

If any one, without views or bias respecting prophecy, or theories of interpretation, were to read this passage for the first time, what would he naturally conclude was the design of the writer in regard to this fourth beast ? Evidently, that this kingdom was wholly different in origin and kind from either of the other three, and that it would be far the most powerful of any. There was no living animal which could be likened unto this beast. Nothing could be more explicit on these points.

Most of the expositors who reject the application of this portion of the vision to the fourth world empire of

¹ Dan. vii. 7-27.

² Dan. vii. 7, 19, 23.

history, namely, the Roman, adopt the following: The lion stands for the Babylonian, the bear for the Median, the leopard for the Persian, and the fourth beast for the Macedonian, empire. Consistency requires that the same succession should be followed in interpreting Nebuchadnezzar's image. The golden head would therefore stand for the Babylonian, the silver chest and arms for the Median, the brazen abdomen and thighs for the Persian, and the iron feet for the Macedonian, empire.

The insuperable objection to this view is that it necessitates the arbitrary invention of a Median empire, which has no more historical existence than a Castilian empire before that of Charles V. or a Scottish empire before the Great Britain of James I. Its interjection as a member of this successive series witnesses only to the distress of expositors fettered by *à priori* considerations.

Others holding like views, feeling the awkwardness of dividing the Medes from the Persians, since they are uniformly linked together in the Book of Daniel, or of assigning to the primitive Median kingdom, which was contemporary with, but not subsequent to, that of Babylon, a position which might as well have been assigned either to Lydia or Egypt at the period of their independence of Persia, have been driven to the alternative of admitting that the leopard does represent Alexander's kingdom, but that by the fourth more terrible beast is meant the kingdom of his general Seleucus and his descendants. Others, again, add to this kingdom of Syria all the Macedonian kingdoms which grew out of Alexander's conquests.

The utter incongruity of all this with facts is apparent at once. Were it true, the origin of the Syrian must have been different from that of Alexander's kingdom. This was not the case. It must have been more powerful. This it was not. It must have devoured and broken in pieces

the whole earth. This Syria certainly did not. Rather, in the time of Antiochus Epiphanes, it was itself being devoured by Rome! The self-contradiction of the author in such a case is also overlooked. He describes Alexander's empire by name in the very next chapter, speaking of its fourfold division between his generals, who should each be inferior to him in power.

Indeed, except for the aforesaid *à priori* considerations, one might think it would be easier to construct a theory something to this effect: that the fourth beast is a purely imaginary creation of the supposed seer, like the Antichrist of some modern prophets, whose coming into the world will be a great and sore trial to the righteous, but who will be destroyed by heavenly intervention just at the supreme crisis.

The chief dependence of those who interpret the fourth beast to mean the kingdom of Antiochus is the language used in regard to the little horn, which came up as the eleventh among the other ten horns of its head. This little horn came after the others, beginning in a small way, but growing, until finally it uprooted three of the original ten horns.¹ It possessed eyes, symbols of intelligence, and a mouth, uttering blasphemous and arrogant words. It is on account of these words that the great solemn scene of judgment in heaven is revealed, resulting in the destruction of the fourth beast in a burning flame. Further, the prophet says that this little horn shall wage war against the saints, and prevail against them, until the intervention of the Most High on their behalf. He is told of all this, and that this blasphemous king "shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time."²

¹ Dan. vii. 7, 8.

² Dan. vii. 21, 25.

The last phrase, time, times—dual, *i. e.*, two times—and the dividing of a time, is supposed to be an equivalent to the most common division of time, a year. The prophecy therefore is that the saints—the Jews—should be given over to the power of this persecuting and blasphemous king for the space of three years and a half. The historical facts claimed to conform exactly to this statement in the case of Antiochus Epiphanes are these:

In the year 170 B.C. this king captured Jerusalem, slew forty thousand persons, and sold other forty thousand into slavery. At that time he forced himself into the Temple, and entered the Holy of Holies. He caused a great sow to be sacrificed on the altar of burnt offering, by way of showing his contempt for the Temple and the Jewish religion. He sprinkled broth made from this unclean animal over every part of the building in order to pollute it, carried off the altar of incense, the shew-bread table, and the golden candlestick, and left a Phrygian tyrant as governor of the Jews.

Two years later, returning from an Egyptian campaign, he detached his general, Apollonius, to attack Jerusalem again, although without the slightest provocation. Apollonius fell upon the unsuspecting Jews on a Sabbath, and slaughtered an immense number. He then built a stronghold over against the Temple, from which his soldiers could sally forth and kill those attempting to go to worship there. From this time the Holy Place was deserted and the daily sacrifices omitted, until Judas Maccabeus restored the service just three years and a half afterwards.

In this recital it is plain that Antiochus supplies the counterpart to the little horn, in his arrogance and blasphemy, in his waging cruel and consuming war against God's people, and in his attempt to "change times and laws" by forcing the Jews to alter their religion. Final-

ly, the coincidence seems to be a striking one between the three years and a half during which the Temple was abandoned after the massacre by Apollonius, and the terms of the prophecy.

These correspondences, however, will prove, on examination, very much like many former supposed identifications in philology. Before the principles of this science were as well understood as they are now, mere similarity of sound in words of different languages was often accepted as sufficient evidence of direct relationship between them. For example, a Babylonian goddess bearing the title "Dom" was thought to link the ancient Babylonish tongue with the Latin—domina. At present these resemblances, even if exact, have no weight unless they can be proved to conform to certain well-settled principles of linguistic correspondence. It may be entirely possible that two words seemingly quite dissimilar in sound, belonging to different languages, are much more nearly allied than others which are pronounced more alike.

In regard to Antiochus, in the first place, the Jews always were his subjects until he drove them into rebellion. When he attacked Jerusalem and profaned the Temple, his interference with their worship extended over a period of five years and a half, not three and a half, as we have seen, this last being only a portion of the supposed length of time when the saints—Jews—really were delivered over to his persecutions. Besides this, we have already shown how difficult it is to believe that the writer of this prophecy could have intended to represent the fourth universal empire by the kingdom of Syria. When we investigate the imagery connected with the appearance of the fourth beast, the contradictions to this view meet us on every hand. There is no evidence whatever that ten kings arose out of Alexander's empire or its Syrian branch by the

time of the Maccabees. In order to make this so, we should be obliged to pick out arbitrarily—as is done by some expositors—about half of the ten from among the Seleucidæ of Antioch, and the remainder from among their rivals, the Ptolemies of Egypt.

Secondly, to correspond with the general symbolism of the Book of Daniel, the ten horns cannot be regarded as meaning ten successive kings at all, but as contemporaneous kingdoms or dynasties, like the four heads of the leopard, the two horns of the ram, and the final four horns of the he-goat.¹

Thirdly, the little horn came up after the ten horns and crowded out or subdued three of them. The ten were therefore originally contemporaneous, and it was only the intruder which was of subsequent origin. This, of course, could not be true of a king who succeeded ten preceding monarchs, for, had the ten been successive, they would each have come up in turn.

Fourthly, Antiochus neither “plucked up” nor “subdued” any kings, but ascended his throne peaceably.

Lastly, no one can pretend that Antiochus lived until “one like the Son of man” came in the clouds of heaven to set up an everlasting kingdom in the place of his kingdom of Antioch. Nor can it be asserted with truth that he died in any unusual manner, in company with that terrible fourth beast, which was typical of the empire of which he was king. He simply died of bowel complaint, in the year 164 B.C., and was succeeded by his son. It is an absurd supposition that a contemporary of Antiochus—for such any writer in the Maccabean period must have been—could be so ignorant of the history of his own age as to represent Judas Maccabeus, slain in battle, as the Son of man. Neither would he have ventured to link such Mes-

¹ Dan. vii., viii.

sianic conceptions with the struggles of his day, however heated he might have been with religious enthusiasm.

On this theory, the writer of this chapter, a contemporary of Antiochus, must have known that his readers would be able to judge for themselves whether that tyrant had or had not subdued three kings, and whether he and his kingdom were or were not destroyed together.

As the perfectly authentic historical Book of Maccabees refers to Daniel, this prophecy could not have been written, at latest, far from the occurrences of that time, when every important event must have been fresh in the minds of the people.¹ Yet on this hypothesis we are asked to believe that the author spoke of Antiochus and his whole nation as slain and cast into a flaming furnace when nothing of the sort took place! It is as if we were told gravely that the Americans witnessed the utter destruction of George III., and of Great Britain with him, after Washington had secured the independence of the United States.

The truth is that we find a vision which refers, by unanimous consent of expositors, to Alexander and his successors.² One of these is described under the figure of a little horn coming up from one of the four divisions which denote the partition of the original Macedonian empire. That *this* little horn is meant to represent Antiochus Epiphanes, no one denies. After prospering and waxing mighty, it is "broken without hand."³ Antiochus, be it remembered, died, not in battle, nor by violence, and his kingdom continued after his death. This view, therefore, might have grown naturally from the mention of the little horn of the great beast, which is illustrative of, though not identical with, the one we are now considering.⁴ The empire of Alexander gives origin to four horns, not to ten, and the time during which the king

¹ Macc. ii. 20.

² Dan. viii.

³ Dan. viii. 25.

⁴ Dan. vii. 8.

represented by the little horn should tread the sanctuary under foot is very different from that mentioned in the previous vision.¹

Another consideration which weighs against this interpretation is the strongly personal character of the Messianic prophecy.² In the Stone cut out of the Mountain it is possible that the author's thoughts did not go beyond the Jewish State and Church.³ This would comport fairly well with the national condition. Since the Captivity there had been no visible king or head. The Church and the saints are not less prominent in this vision, but the chief interest attaches to the Son of man, who comes with the clouds of heaven to the Ancient of days to receive "dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all people and nations and languages shall serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed."⁴ It is evident here that the writer is speaking of something in the future. Were he really a Maccabean Jew, we might imagine him looking forward to the speedy appearing of the Messiah, and inventing this imaginary apocalyptic scene for the comfort and encouragement of the people in their struggle with Antiochus. But when both predictions failed of fulfilment, when the Messiah did not come, neither did Antiochus and his kingdom perish as described, we confess that we cannot understand why this accomplished personator of the venerated prophet Daniel should not have modified his language into a little more conformity with facts.

We venture to say that except for the strong resemblance between the two little horns, taken in connection with the pronounced Maccabean allusions in the latter

¹ Dan. viii. 22; comp. Dan. vii. 25; viii. 14.

² Dan. vii. 13, 14.

³ Dan. ii. 34.

⁴ Dan. vii. 14.

part of the book, this reference to Antiochus Epiphanes, identifying as it does the mightiest of all the types of conquering empires with his weak kingdom, would never have taken place.¹ Arguing from those later chapters backwards, the earlier visions of Nebuchadnezzar's image and of Daniel's four world-subduing powers are made to appear only as variations of one and the same theme—the Maccabean war of independence.

It is never a safe principle in exposition, however, nor one which would be tolerated in any other connection, to sacrifice the plain meaning of one passage in order to make it conform to another. There is no single analogy or resemblance between the fourth beast and the he-goat.² All the representative and typical features, as well as the time relations, are different, with the one exception of an aftergrowth on each of a little horn which is explained as prefiguring the appearance of a sacrilegious and persecuting king. But has history produced only one enemy of the Church, and he Antiochus Epiphanes?

The radical objection to all such interpretations of special or limited application is that sufficient account is not taken of the wide range of view contained in these prophecies. It is avowed from the first that they cover the whole course of the world's history to its close, or, at least, to the final establishment of the Messiah's kingdom upon earth. We are, therefore, in no condition as yet to speak of their complete fulfilment.

Many Protestant commentators, rightly considering that the fourth beast is best represented by the Roman empire, have identified the little horn with the most direct heir to Roman name and power, the Papacy. The resemblance begins with its gradual aftergrowth among the other powers which rose upon the division of the empire. Though

¹ Dan. vii., viii.

² Dan. vii., viii.

at first of small consequence politically, it soon surpassed them all in its mighty and widespread sway, acquired by wonderful ability and skill. These facts correspond completely to the representation of a little horn among many greater ones, but endowed with eyes. The arrogant assumptions of the Papacy, also, especially shown in the claim it makes to the exclusive and absolute authority over the consciences of men, based upon its sharing the infallibility of God himself, supply the other parallel to the mouth which utters "great," *i. e.*, blasphemous, things. Sorrowfully enough, appeal can be made to its bloody record in history, to bear out only too perfectly the last character—that of a cruel and persecuting power; its victims some of the purest and most devoted followers of the Son of man.

While all these analogies may be freely admitted, still this exposition fails to cover more than a portion of the field surveyed by the eye of the prophet. This, indeed, never can be properly viewed so long as the attention is fixed exclusively upon opposing powers and dominions, rather than upon the blessed kingdom which is to supplant them. All Christians must acknowledge that the chief intent of the prophecy is to foretell the ultimate and universal triumph of the kingdom of God in its conflict with the kingdoms of the world. Does this prophecy, in any of its various parts or aspects, indicate that the conflict has already ended, or even that it is nearly approaching its end? If the little horn of the fourth beast really means Antiochus, the struggle was over before Christ was born. If the little horn represents the Papacy, all that is needed to establish the kingdom of the Son of man is to overthrow the Pope. But the extremest Protestant hardly now supposes that with the downfall of the Pope there would be no Antichrists left. Is

nothing more than this requisite to convert the atheistic unbelief of modern times to Christianity? Is the dominion of the Pope the only obstacle to the conquest by the Church of the wide realms of Islam, of Buddhism, and of heathendom?

It is owing to such limited conceptions that chronological possibilities and forecastings are so eagerly sought for, to enable people to become prophets themselves, by interpretation instead of inspiration. There is no more marked feature characteristic of millenarian literature and speculation than this dependence upon nearsightedness. It sees only its own age, and finds in it the whole "vision and prophecy" rounded out and complete, particularly in connection with the personality of the beast.

But when we turn to the prophet's inspired point of view, from which every object is seen only in its relation to that kingdom which shall never be destroyed nor pass away, we behold, in the first vision, the single stone grow into a world-mountain, after it has ground to powder the one, albeit fourfold, dominion of earth, leaving no vestige of it behind.

Although enough has already occurred in the gradual fulfilment of the prophecy to strike the mind with wonder, the utmost which can now be said truthfully in regard to Christ's kingdom is that it has grown to be a great mountain, the greatest of all mountains in the world, but still far from occupying the whole earth. If, therefore, it be not permitted to us in the present age to see the first vision carried out to its full extent, is it probable that we can definitely pronounce on the manner or the time of fulfilment of the second? Can we identify the last power opposed to God and to the Son of man? The destruction of that great enemy appears to point towards the culmination of the long conflict, which has assumed many dif-

ferent shapes in different ages. Are we so unmistakably in view of the end that we can recognize clearly the features of that final adversary, whose overthrow would leave no one in all the kingdoms of man unwilling to bow to the name of the heavenly King? Certainly this cannot be predicated of any single foe of the Church in our day. There is no one Antichrist now, but a world full of the spirit of Antichrist instead, and therefore ready for his advent, and this is all that we can say.

On looking more closely at the revelation of the coming heavenly kingdom we perceive a significant oneness in the powers opposed to it, underlying and continuous through all their different phases. The Stone does not only crush to powder the iron and clay of the feet of the image, but also the brass, the silver, and the gold of which the other parts are composed, as if they coexisted with the iron which typifies the fourth kingdom. Likewise no one of the beasts which comes up out of the troubled sea destroys the preceding one, for we read, after the annihilation of the fourth beast, "as concerning the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away: yet their lives were prolonged for a season and time."¹ Evidently the conception of a certain unity in diversity among the great world-powers pertains to both visions. The image, differing in its successive parts, is still one, and, as a whole, will find its destroyer in the Stone sent by God into the world. The beasts in like manner proceed from one common origin, and contend, not with each other, but with the saints of the Most High, or the Church of God.

We must seek some unifying principle in the one kingdom to understand its unvarying antagonism to the other. Viewed in the light of history only, each conquering power actually supplanted its predecessor, but seen from the

¹ Dan. vii. 2, 3, 12.

standpoint of the moral kingdom of Christ there was no change. All four empires, and all their succeeding branches, are either parts of one great whole, or products of the same abiding source of evil influence and power. To apprehend the real meaning of the prophecy, so that we can correctly interpret its spirit, we must contrast the fundamental law of the kingdom of heaven with that which is the common generic principle of the kingdoms of earth.

The principle of the new kingdom is *Peace*. That of the ancient kingdom, which it is to supplant, is *Strife*. The older kingdom dates from the very commencement of the present earthly economy. It has always been the law of earthly life that it should come by, and into, struggle. Modern atheism rejoices in the demonstration of a law which accounts for all forms of life, without a Creator, by chance causes of survival in an eternal war of extermination. This doctrine might be fairly formulated thus :

Strife is, yesterday and to-day, God. It alone fashions all life, even to the number and color of the hairs on each animal's head. It is not design, it is the great food question, which has made the fish of the sea, the fowl of the air, and the beast of the field, for all these have been shaped ultimately by the effort either to eat, or to avoid being eaten.

From a naturalist's standpoint alone, there is much to confirm and make this an apparently correct statement. The ocean depths, in their more than midnight darkness, teem with wonderful forms of life, all in continuous and fearful war. The vast insect world knows no peace nor mercy. If birds were conscious of their hourly peril from cruel enemies, there would be no song in the forests. Everywhere nature—without man—shows but one condition for existence—insecurity.

It is a remarkable fact, that, scientifically speaking, the first dawn of peace on earth came with the advent of man. It was the creature made in the image of God who first interfered with the universal slaughter of original nature by his domestication of animals. Slowly but surely he has subdued all predatory life, and given the surface of the earth over to peaceful flocks and herds, so that the primeval savagery of the world is now only found where man cannot follow to suppress it, as in the realm of insect life, and in the waters.

But of this troubled and warring world man is a native, sharing to the full its original principle and spirit. He partakes of the animal body, and therefore its impulses, instincts, and desires dwell in him, constituting that which in the language of Scripture is called the fleshly or carnal mind. War, therefore, is the oldest historical fact. The spirit of self-assertion, supremacy, and conquest is as universally hereditary in man as any unvarying anatomical feature of his physical frame.

The law of heaven is love, instead of strife. It is to cast out this old spirit of antagonism to love that the new kingdom is come into the world. In the contrast made of the two by the apostle, the first, shown in strife and competition, is the earthly, animal, devilish wisdom, that which is from above being peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated.¹ There must, therefore, be a radical and abiding opposition of the old to the new, until at last, when every form of disguise is impossible, its innate spirit of revolt against the rule of God himself will be openly and defiantly avowed.

Bearing this in mind, the various elements of the prophetic outlook fall into harmonious perspective. The covenant with Abraham, destined to bring the blessing

¹ James iii. 15, R. V.

into the world, had slowly matured through the ages into the people of the Most High, now, in Daniel's time, definitely launched upon the great sea of the world. Hereafter there are to be two factors in the operation of the divine plan for the transformation of mankind when the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and they shall not hurt nor destroy in all God's holy mountain. And these two factors shall be the Church, ever surrounded by her enemies, and her King, the Son of man, for the prophecy assigns the kingdom to both—*i. e.*, to the former through the latter. The four kingdoms are those four mighty historic empires of force, each of which, while embodying the spirit of the great adversary, nevertheless in its own appointment and time bore a special relation to the destiny of the Church and to the coming of Christ.

Thus Babylon, by her cruel captivity, nevertheless fulfilled the counsel of God in causing Zion to "thresh and beat in pieces many people and consecrate their gain unto the Lord."¹ Persia desolated the East for many centuries, but helped mightily to emancipate God's people from idolatry. The power of the Grecian kingdom was directed with set purpose towards the extermination of the worship of Jehovah, only in the end to give to the sons of Zion the matchless language of Greece, indispensable for the extension of the kingdom of God. Finally came the last and most momentous form of world power. What type of the old kingdom has ever appeared like that last? One finds it difficult to choose among its manifold manifestations of the principle of strife, such as its cool, murderous patience in war; its enjoyment of triumph, shown in the insolent pageant awaiting the Roman conqueror; its enjoyment of cruelty, shown in the nightly massacres of the amphitheatre; and in its universal slavery.

¹ Micah iv. 13.

Then in the days of this fourth kingdom, when a Tiberius sat upon its throne, came the Prince of Peace. What other fulfilment of Daniel's vision can be mentioned by the side of this advent in its inexpressible impressiveness? Who would then naturally have looked towards Bethlehem for the beginning of a kingdom before which the dominion of the Cæsars, and all others like unto it, would become as the fine dust which the wind shall carry forever away?

During the first three centuries of our era the fourth beast of Daniel's vision was regarded by all the Christian writers as undoubtedly prefiguring the awful, persecuting power of heathen Rome. The natural but great mistake of the next century was in imagining that the world had been converted to Christ by the conversion of Constantine. The same mistake has been repeated from age to age since, in considering the so-called Christian nations which rose on the division of the Roman dominion as really belonging to the kingdom of God. In truth, they are all of them only slightly leavened by that kingdom, and in very varying degrees. So far, indeed, is the old kingdom from being cast down, or its spirit cast out in them, that only to God is it known how great the struggle is yet to be against the supremacy of Christ, in this same modern world, which is the historic heir of the Roman empire.

We must remember that Christianity began in the days of that empire. Not only so, but its subsequent development has been restricted, geographically and intellectually, to its domain. Whoever goes to India or China is at once made aware that the Western nations live in a different world of thought and action from that of the great Eastern nations. This is largely due to the common inheritance of the former from the great Græco-Roman world. It was there that Christianity found its

chief aids to growth, but there also it encountered a spirit which is and ever will be its most certain and abiding antagonist, so that we may feel assured that if Antichrist is to come from any one division of mankind, he will be no Asiatic from China or India, nor from Islam. He will be the product, rather, of that so-called Christendom itself, which is the modern representative of Daniel's fourth world-power.

The language of this prophecy plainly indicates that the spirit personified by the fourth beast would assume for its final development an outspoken and persecuting *atheism*.¹ It is against the Most High himself that the great words are uttered on account of which the judgment is set, and the Son of man is summoned to the throne of the nations.

As already shown, the commencement of European domination coincided in history with the conquest by Alexander the Great. Therefore it is not without meaning that that event coincided with a pronounced development of an atheistic spirit in the Greek world itself. Mr. Grote closes his masterly history of Greece with an instructive extract, illustrating the total loss, among the Athenians of that age, of the religious faith which characterized the better days of their fathers. It occurs in a song in honor of the visit of the Macedonian prince Demetrius Poliorketes. On which Mr. Grote remarks, "This song is curious, . . . and is moreover among the latest Grecian documents that we possess, bearing on actual or present reality. The poet, addressing Demetrius as a god, and son of Poseidon and Aphrodite [Latin, Neptune and Venus], says, 'To Thee we pray! for other gods are either afar off—or have no ears—or do not exist—or care nothing about us; but Thee we see before us, not in

¹ 2 Thess. ii. 3, 4.

wood or marble, but in real presence.'” Atheism has said its utmost when it addresses a mortal man as God, for if such be God, what is he?

We can understand, therefore, the scorn with which an Antiochus Epiphanes—whose weak and despicable grandfather styled himself *Theos*—would regard the unwavering faith of the Jews in their Jehovah, and that he would defiantly desecrate his temple with every manifestation of contempt and hatred. In all this he was an instructive type of other and later personifications of the same spirit.

When Christ came, Rome had likewise lost her traditional faith. Throughout the empire stood statues of the atheistic emperors, to be worshipped with the worship of God. Each Christian then was obliged to face the test as to whether he would bow before the image of the beast, or witness with his life to his allegiance to God. Again we see the same arrogant assumption of the prerogatives of Deity gradually developing in the Church itself, and causing more cruel strife and bloodshed than all other persecuting powers combined, illustrating the unvarying characteristics of Antichrist—pride, craft, and murder—with the ever-present demand for the worship of men as they would worship God.

Approaching our own age, a marked change in the form assumed by the opposition of the world begins to show itself. It is evident to the most casual observer that the conflict of the present day is rapidly concentrating around the single issue of theism against atheism. The events that are to signalize the progress of this momentous struggle no human wisdom can forecast. But of this much we are certainly assured; the spirit now breathing through so many atheistic utterances has a deep and strong hold on the modern world of thought, presaging for atheism a great future of seeming conquest

and triumph. Doubtless, also, judging from manifestations already numerous, its hour may be marked by the same cruel intolerance which signalized its first outbreak in 1793, nearly a century ago. With these signs before us, it is plain that the end is not yet. But with the word of prophecy thus ever made more sure, the Christian can rest in its final promise of the complete removal of every power of strife from a world ruled over at last by the Prince of Peace.

“Who is this Son of man?” This question was once asked by men filled with the old spirit of hatred and murder. “Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed? And Jesus said, I am: and ye shall see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of power, and coming with the clouds of heaven.”¹ There can be no doubt but this identification of himself by Jesus with Daniel’s vision of the Son of man was the immediate pretext for his death. In the scene immediately following this avowal we have the most wonderful commentary ever penned upon the depth of the ancient malignity. But as the long centuries have passed, what has been their unvarying testimony except that he who then called himself the Son of man has been ever since that day at the right hand of Power?

The Prophecy of the Ninth Chapter.

The great prophecy in this chapter is quite different from its predecessors both in form and substance. Instead of a survey of the history of the world, as in the second and seventh chapters, it relates to the coming of an Anointed One, or Messiah, and to the subsequent destiny of Jerusalem and the Temple. The prophet tells us that the sad fate of the city of his fathers was on his mind when this revelation of its future was made to him. He

¹ Mark xiv. 61, 62, R. V.

had satisfied himself that the close of the seventy years prophesied by Jeremiah, during which Jerusalem should lie desolate, was approaching. Therefore, he set apart to himself a day of fasting, humiliation, and prayer, in which he implored God to restore the Holy City and the Temple. This prayer, remarkable for beauty and pathos, serves admirably as an introduction to its answer from heaven, brought by the angel, which reads as follows :

“Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy.

“Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem, unto the Messiah the Prince, shall be seven weeks, and three score and two weeks : the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times.

“And after three score and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself : and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary ; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined.

“And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week : and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.”¹

It is universally admitted by scholars that the seventy weeks, or “sevens,” “determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city” mean so many sevens of years, or four hundred and ninety years in the aggregate. Before we attempt, however, to discover the limits of this period, it is of especial importance to understand the explanatory summary in verse 24 of the great ends to be accomplished within that set time. The language of the verse is evidently designed to cause the character of the events foretold to define their fulfilment. This seems of more consequence than their dates. The aim apparently is that all

¹ Dan. ix. 24-27.

future developments should be judged as related to that fulfilment in proportion to their correspondence with the primary objects of the whole dispensation. These objects both indicate and explain the design of the prophecy. They are here stated to be—first, to finish or restrain transgression, to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity; second, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy.

In view of the distinct statements of this verse, it is contrary to every rule of sound interpretation to begin by a search for some event, the occurrence of which, or for some person, the fate of whom, would coincide chronologically with either of the specified subdivisions of the seventy weeks. That question should be undertaken only after the correspondence of the supposed fulfilment with these revealed divine purposes has been clearly demonstrated. The most exact parallels in regard to date would prove of little avail if the events themselves bore no more particular relation to sin or to righteousness than to any other great facts in history.

For this reason, this initial definition of the meaning of the revelation should direct the whole investigation. It alone affords the point of view from which every feature of the prophetic scene can be recognized in its organic relation to the whole. We therefore proceed to a careful examination of the expressions which claim to make known the great objects in the providence of God, of which those years were to witness the accomplishment.

The word translated in the text “finish,” and in the margin “restrain,” means properly to shut up, or to put under bonds. It is repeatedly so rendered in other parts of the Old Testament.¹ The language is very general, re-

¹ 1 Sam. vi. 10; Jer. xxxii. 3; Psalms lxxxviii. 8, etc.

ferring to sin as it exists in the world, and suggests that in some way, as a result of events soon to be detailed, there would be a restraining of the prevalence of sin, compared with former times, rather than that it would be finished, never to appear again. This idea is corroborated by the next phrase "to make an end of sins," in the margin, to "seal up sins." The primary meaning of the word is to seal up as a hidden thing, to be put out of sight—*i. e.*, the dead in a tomb, documents in a chest, etc.¹ In like manner would sin be removed from view.

"To make reconciliation for iniquity" is, literally, "to cover over," "to overlay"—in a general sense, to pardon. It is plain that the predestined events here announced are to have for their great object the suppression of transgression, and the forgiveness of sins, removing them from sight. How this result was to be effected is not stated, though the implication necessarily is that it was in some way to grow out of the prophesied developments of the seventy weeks.

Corresponding to these changes in respect to sin, three other results follow, the first of which is the bringing in of everlasting righteousness. The same abstract conception of the work still obtains. No particular sin or sins can be meant in the first clause, nor any individual or personal righteousness in the second. The designation "everlasting" shows it to be that divine righteousness so often mentioned in the Old Testament in connection with some manifestation of the divine goodness towards men.² Such a righteousness is to be brought, or caused to come, into the world. The next expression, "to seal up the vision and prophecy," plainly enough denotes the completion of the long-inspired revelation which had been sent by the prophets, from Moses and Samuel down, evidently on

¹ Isa. xxix. 11; Jer. xxxii. 11, 14.

² Compare Isa. li. 6-8.

account of the fulfilment of its object, when that which had been "determined" was accomplished, and the function of prophecy thus terminated.

The last phrase is more difficult to explain. If it be translated "to anoint the Most Holy One," it must refer to the coming of *the* Messiah, the Son of David of the other prophets, the Son of man of Daniel's vision. The word itself, however, is only doubtfully applied to persons in the Old Testament, but very commonly to things. In accordance to that general usage, it should read "to anoint the Most Holy Place," *i. e.*, the Temple, or its inner Sanctuary, the Holy of Holies. In this view, the expression must have conveyed to Daniel an assurance not only of the rebuilding of the Temple, but also that it would, in some way, receive an especial consecration.

Had the angel stopped here, Daniel's very natural conclusion would have been that within the definite future time of four hundred and ninety years occurrences would take place, closely connected with Jerusalem and his nation, restraining the prevalence of sin in the world, and causing it to be forgiven and blotted out of sight; also, that in its stead, taking the place of the revelation by the prophets, a revelation of heavenly righteousness would be made, which would give a new sacredness to the Temple of the Lord.

But the further unfolding of the message, instead of explaining how sin was to be forgiven and righteousness "brought in" through the coming events, foretells that the specified time of seventy weeks of years was to be marked off into three divisions, the first of forty-nine years, the second a long period of four hundred and thirty-four years, and the third one of seven years. The beginning of these seventy weeks was to date from the issuing of a decree to restore and build the city of Jeru-

salem, the construction of which, in wall and street, would occupy the first division of forty-nine years, though this rebuilding should not be unaccompanied by difficulties, or, as it is expressed, in troublous times. The wish which Daniel had most at heart is here promised a fulfilment. This is the natural reading of the passage.

The close of the second period was to coincide with the advent of an anointed leader, or Messiah Prince.¹ After this, Messiah should be cut off, or killed, leaving no successor. Instead, the people of another prince would come and destroy both Jerusalem and the Temple, the end of which should be with a flood, or like a deluge, followed by a destined, though unknown, period of desolation.

Lastly, the ancient covenant of God would be confirmed with many of the people of Israel during the conclusion of the seventy weeks. Before the end of this last week, or, rather, in the midst of it, God would cause the sacrifice and the oblation in the Temple to cease, as he had before closed the vision and the prophecy. The scene ends with the idols of the desolator upon the battlements of the Temple, and another ruin, which shall continue until the consummation.

In expounding the meaning of the message, we note, in the first place, that the coming of the Messiah Prince is evidently appointed at the end of the sixty-two weeks following upon the first period. There is no hint of two Messiahs, and it is Messiah who is to be cut off at this time. It is, therefore, unnatural in the last degree to suppose that the Messiah of verse 26 is different from him of the preceding sentence, when nothing indicates the change. The original language does not specify the Anointed One, but reads, "a Messiah, a Prince," and in

¹ Compare Isa. lv. 4.

the second clause simply "Messiah," leaving the context to determine who he is. The word in verse 26 translated "be cut off" invariably means a violent death. The phrase following, "but not for himself," should read "there shall nothing be to him." The natural association is with one suddenly withdrawn from his place in the world.

No Israelite needs information as to who it is who shall "confirm the covenant with many" in the last week. Only God, who made, can confirm the covenant, either directly or through the agency of the Angel of the Covenant so well known in the Old Testament pages. No other interpretation of this sentence can be adduced without reading into a Jewish document that which no Jew would ever write. It is God who causes the sacrifice and oblation to cease in the middle of the last week, before the coming of the foreign Prince with his destroying army. The last clause of verse 27 is more obscure, owing to its designed and oracle-like indefiniteness. The word translated "overspreading" means, properly, the wings or the extension of an edifice, therefore also battlements. "Abominations" here bears the technical meaning of idols. For this reason the marginal rendering seems clearer—"Upon the battlements shall be the idols of the desolator." The rest of the verse suggests plainly a second prolonged and far-reaching desolation both of Jerusalem and the Temple.

That the Christian recognizes as the central thought of this prophecy the coming and death of Jesus Christ is surely no wonder. The language with which it begins, explaining what is "determined," inevitably suggests the cardinal principle of our faith, that Jesus came into the world, and was cut off out of it, for the very purpose of bringing to pass that which is so fully stated as the ordained effect of these prophetic events. He came to put

a check upon the world's career of transgression, and to do away with the sins of men by the reconciliation obtained for them through his sacrificial death. By this alone comes the righteousness which opens to them the everlasting inheritance of the sinless life of heaven. With his coming, also, the whole dispensation of type and prophecy necessarily cease. He is himself the fulfilment of the promise and the object of the covenant.

While these are the essential and fundamental principles of the Christian religion, without which, indeed, it would be no religion, it cannot be said of any one of them that it is natural to other systems of faith or doctrine. They were from the first wholly new to the world, and to this day they stand by themselves among the beliefs of mankind. No other religion, nor any philosophical system, is based upon a death, or regards the violent removal of a man from life as in any possible way related to the forgiveness of sins, or the procuring of righteousness. There is nothing in these peculiar tenets of Christianity which would occur naturally to men's minds, so that we would be likely to find them associated with others besides Jesus Christ.

Therefore, it must be admitted, even by the extremest rationalist, that when we find in advance a summary of the meaning of the prophesied events, speaking of the forgiveness of sins by a covering over, or atonement, and of the final fulfilment and completion of prophecy by the revelation of an everlasting righteousness, and bringing these great ends into unmistakable connection with the cutting-off of Messiah or Christ, the Christian interpretation of this passage is thoroughly natural and consistent. If there be such thing as prophecy, this must unhesitatingly be considered one, for it leaves nothing in its terms to which a Christian could add. Could any of them, in-

deed, be shown as inconsistent with the reference to Jesus Christ; did he not fulfil it in all its parts, its opponents would not be slow to point this out. It is important to notice that no attempt of the kind is ever made. The only course adopted to refute the Christian rendering is one which endeavors to prove that the prophecy may also refer to other persons and events.

There is a peculiar and solemn significance lent by this interpretation, and belonging to none other, in the determining of a set time during which the destiny of the ancient covenant people should be fixed, so far, that is, as its existence as a nation with its cherished capital was concerned. All is to terminate in disastrous overthrow and destruction, and the vision closes with a scene of ruin and desecration befalling both city and Temple.

Viewed simply as a turning-point in history, no single event can compare in importance with the visit of Peter to the house of the Roman centurion, Cornelius, some three years and a half after the death of Jesus. Then began the conversion of the world to Christ, the substitution of the Gentile for the Jew in the covenant relation with God. Many of the ancient people had first been gathered into the new confirmation, for all the founders and teachers of the Church were Jews. But the adherence of Cornelius to the Christian faith really marks the close of that last long trial of the Jewish race, when, after their final re-establishment in their own country, they remained in it nearly five centuries, thus being allowed full time to show whether they would continue faithful to their God, or experience a far more determined forsaking than in the day of Babylon.

The last week of the Jewish probation of four hundred and ninety years, therefore, would coincide, according to this view, with the seven years opening with the preach-

ing of John the Baptist, and the public appearance of Jesus, and closing with the calling of the Gentiles, an event shadowed forth by the conversions, respectively, of Cornelius and St. Paul. Henceforward the foreign peoples were to be members of God's covenant, while for Jerusalem and the Temple nothing remained but the fearful coming of the Roman Prince, Titus—not yet made emperor—with the eagles of his desolating legions. The final historical chapter in the great destruction fulfils to the letter the last words of this prophecy.

An event occurs in the middle of this concluding week, that is, at the end of three years and a half from the beginning of the seven years, which consists in a divine suspension of the daily sacrifice in the Temple. He who confirms the covenant causes the Temple rites to cease. This would seem, at first sight, to contradict exactly the confirmation of the ancient compact, because the Temple sacrifices themselves were daily witnesses to God's covenant with his chosen people. But to the Christian this fact is only another proof of the truth of his interpretation. The last words of Christ on the cross—when he was “cut off”—were, “It is finished.”¹ They explain that the whole Temple ceremonial ceased at that moment by limitation, for “the vail of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom,” indicating that the way of access to the Throne of Grace was now opened to all men by *the* Sacrifice which had made reconciliation for iniquity.² This happened at the close of the three years and a half of our Lord's public ministry. All that remained to complete the “determined” period was to confirm the covenant “with many;” with three thousand in one day, with many thousands afterwards. This share by the Jews in the new covenant, however, continued but for a brief pe-

¹ John xix. 30.

² Mark xv. 38.

riod. The work among them soon ceased, and the covenant was withdrawn for all the long mournful centuries since, during which they have wandered, lost as in the wilderness, without guide or protector.

We now come to the question of the determination of the time divisions of this prophecy. The subject has certain difficulties, common to all attempts to settle really ancient dates, owing to the varying length of the year in the calendars of different ancient peoples. With some, the years were composed of lunar months, having three hundred and fifty-four instead of three hundred and sixty-five days. The Babylonian year counted three hundred and sixty days. This alone causes a difference of between six and fourteen years in the four hundred and ninety. When we add the further difficulty of finding the true correspondence between the Greek and Roman eras and those of Babylon and Persia, it is plain that nothing nearer than approximate dates can be expected, *i. e.*, those which, at most, do not exceed fourteen years from the alleged termination. Still, the true solar year was sufficiently well known and accepted among the leading nations of antiquity to justify our adherence to it in these calculations. Our first endeavor should be to determine the starting-point from which the successive divisions of the seventy weeks proceed.

A clearly defined date for this beginning is given in the words of verse 25, "know therefore and understand that from the going forth of the commandment *to restore and to build Jerusalem*, unto the Messiah, the Prince," etc. The point of departure is thus settled. It coincides with the issuing of a decree to rebuild the ruined city. This is afterwards shown to mean the reconstruction of its defences, the only ancient conception of a true city, with the remarkable exception of Sparta. This decree, of

course, must have proceeded from earthly rather than divine authority, for neither Daniel nor his readers could predicate anything as to the time of the issuing of a decree in heaven. It is, therefore, the commandment of some Persian monarch in regard to Jerusalem and the Temple to which reference is here made. Turning to history, we find three instances of the kind, either of which might be, and have been, assumed, as furnishing the conditions requisite to serve as the beginning of the seventy weeks.

The first of these is a decree of Cyrus the Great, issued in the first year of his reign over Babylon, by virtue of which those of the Jewish exiles who wished to do so were permitted to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the Temple of Jehovah.¹ Curiously enough, no mention is made in this decree of the city itself, except incidentally, as the place where the Temple is located. It is scarcely probable that the king, in the beginning of his rule over a newly conquered empire, would allow Jerusalem to be rebuilt and fortified. Motives of state policy would forbid. He knew that it cost the great Nebuchadnezzar a siege of three years and a half to reduce the city, and very shortly he was induced to arrest the work on the Temple from apprehension of trouble of this nature.² This feeling was fostered by the Samaritans, ever implacable adversaries of the Jews. They seem also to have been equally successful in influencing his son Cambyses—the Ahasuerus of Ezra. Following upon this, we have a correspondence given us between several Samaritan chiefs and Smerdis—Artaxerxes—the successor of Cambyses, charging the Jews with an attempt to rebuild Jerusalem instead of the Temple, which Cyrus had allowed, and warning the king that, were that city restored and forti-

¹ Ezra i. 2-4.

² Ezra iv. 5.

fied, his rule over the lands west of the Euphrates would come to a speedy end. This letter elicited an order from the monarch that the work on the Temple should be discontinued. That edifice remained unfinished, and Jerusalem was a ruined and defenceless village until the second year of the reign of Darius Hystaspes, successor to Smerdis.

We learn from Greek history, as well as from his own inscriptions, that Darius, after having put to death the usurper Smerdis—who, as a magian, had introduced many changes among the religious and civil institutions of Persia—endeavored to restore the policy of the Great Cyrus, which he followed closely throughout his reign. We can understand from this how the dispirited colony of Jews in Jerusalem took fresh courage after his accession, and attempted to resume work on the Temple. When again interfered with, they appealed to Darius, beseeching him to permit the original decree of Cyrus to be sought for. This being found in the royal archives at Ecbatana, the king promulgated an edict to the effect that the rebuilding should proceed without delay, and that the Jews should be assisted in their work with money from the royal treasury.¹ Consequently, the Temple was at last finished, in the sixth year of the reign of Darius.

Throughout this whole period, the Jews were allowed to proceed with their work of restoration only on the express understanding that Jerusalem itself should neither be restored nor fortified. As we have seen, the jealousy of the Persian government on this point was such that the renewing of the Temple was repeatedly delayed under the pretext that it was their city which the exiles were really building.

Under Xerxes, son of Darius, they enjoyed a further

¹ Ezra iv.

season of encouragement in the favor shown to Ezra. He was permitted to make up another colony to reinforce the small and disheartened band whose humble abodes clustered around their newly restored sanctuary, and, with his caravan, he made the journey from Babylon to Jerusalem in three months, finding, on his arrival, everything in the civil and religious life of his people in great disorder.¹ Although he effected many reforms, he did nothing in regard to the rebuilding of the city, his commission not extending so far. This, moreover, was thwarted as jealously as before by the ever-watchful Samaritans.

We now reach a very different history, which records an express decree issued by a Persian monarch, Artaxerxes Longimanus, to rebuild Jerusalem and to fortify it with a wall. A full narrative of the manner in which permission was granted to do something uniformly forbidden before, with the difficulties attending its accomplishment, is given us by the chief actor in the enterprise. Nehemiah was one of that long line of Jews which have risen to positions of high responsibility in the courts and governments of history. The confidence inspired by his character is shown in the office which he held—that of the king's cup-bearer—and in the ready credence manifested by the king to his explanation of his sadness of countenance while handing the wine-cup.

Nothing is more frequent in an Oriental court than the suggestion of poison. The least sign of emotion in a servant's face while handing the goblet to his master might suffice to send him to the torture or the block. We can, therefore, readily imagine the terror with which the king's question inspired Nehemiah.² He at once told the whole truth. He had just learned from friends returning from Jerusalem that the city of his fathers lay waste and de-

¹ Ezra vii.

² Neh. ii. 2.

fenceless. It was for this cause that he had wept, and mourned, and fasted. The king kindly requested his servant to state his wishes in the matter, and upon hearing them allowed him to proceed to Jerusalem in the capacity of royal viceroy, with a force sufficient to build the wall of Jerusalem and to set up its gates. Nehemiah is careful to record the date of this decree, which was the twentieth year of the reign of Artaxerxes. His own stay in Jerusalem as governor lasted for twelve years, during which he carried out the task of completing the defences of the city and repairing its waste places, always harassed and threatened by the ceaseless hostility of the Samaritans.

Here, therefore, we have a definite date for a definite commandment to restore and rebuild Jerusalem, contemplated by the language of the prophecy, to which event alone it can be properly referred. It was evidently not the intention of any of the previous decrees that Jerusalem should be restored. In regard to the Temple it was different. Great shrines, the resort of thousands of pilgrims from every quarter of the world, were common enough in that day, and the sanctuary of the Jews might well be classed under that head. But a strongly fortified capital city was quite another matter. It is doubtful whether any one except a court favorite could have secured so important a concession.

The only question, then, remaining unsettled is the date in the Roman calendar corresponding to the twentieth year of the reign of Artaxerxes Longimanus in order to fix its distance in time from the Christian era. From the difficulties before alluded to in regard to ancient chronology, it may well be thought that we cannot bring such a calculation to a definite year; yet it is remarkable that the widest divergence between the many different compu-

tations made from this starting-point to the end of the sixty-nine weeks—or four hundred and eighty-three years—when the Messiah should appear, do not vary ten years either way from the date of the preaching of John the Baptist and the first public appearance of Jesus Christ.

The calculation of Archbishop Usher brings the close of the sixty-nine weeks to A.D. 29, the year before the baptism of Jesus, when he “was about thirty years of age.”¹ This conclusion is supported by the laborious researches of Hengstenberg, who has investigated the subject with more thoroughness than any modern author. The earlier computation of Calmet places this date at A.D. 34; that of Jahr and Hales at A.D. 39, respectively five and ten years later. This is the extreme limit advocated by any writer.

It could scarcely escape notice, from a very early period, that the time of the appearance of Jesus as a public teacher approaches so nearly the date specified in the prophecy that it would be natural to find men’s minds widely impressed with the conviction of the Messiah’s advent about that time. It is a matter of common history that this was the case among the Jews of that age. It is alluded to by the Roman historians of the period, Tacitus and Suetonius. The early Christian Fathers relied so entirely upon this coincidence that, for the most part, they did not hesitate to select the date of the mission of Nehemiah as the true point of departure in their interpretations of the prophecy.

The statements of some modern critics, that the earlier decrees of Cyrus and Darius in regard to the rebuilding of the Temple are of equal value for this purpose, we have shown untenable. These decrees do not refer to Jerusalem, and therefore cannot fulfil the language of the

¹ Luke iii. 23, R. V.

prophecy. It is no answer to this to cite the words "that saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid."¹ The evident intention of this passage is simply to recognize the good-will of the great Persian in terminating the Captivity, by permitting the exiles to return to their ruined city to rebuild the Temple, and with it their forsaken homes. His own official language determines that his design extended no further. That the Jews were allowed this much fully justifies the poetical expressions of the prophet, but by no means the modern inference that Cyrus granted to Zerubbabel the same privilege extended by Artaxerxes to Nehemiah. Ezra's record as to the after-conduct of the king proves just the reverse.

The Christian rendering of this prediction leaves nothing unfulfilled, either in letter or spirit. Within four hundred and ninety years from the most natural historic beginning of the prophetic period, began and ended the last age of the covenant with Israel. Within the last seven of those years began and ended the events which had been the theme of all prophecy, the coming of Messiah, or Christ, his death "for the remission of sins" and for "the bringing-in of everlasting righteousness," with the termination of prophecy, type, and ritual; and, lastly, the final confirmation of the covenant with many of the ancient people of God. After this, nothing remained but the destruction of both city and sanctuary, in a ruin which the ages have left as the prophecy leaves it, to last until a determined consummation.

That a great consummation is yet to be witnessed is assured by the wonderful survival of Israel as a people, through centuries of unparalleled suffering History for-

¹ Isa. xliv. 28.

bids us to doubt a divine design in the world. Every great race has had a mission to fulfil. Sometimes it seems as if we might almost say that nations possess an historic consciousness of their destiny, and perform their part accordingly. No one can definitely predict the future of the members of the old covenant; and yet surely their singular place among the peoples of the world, and their remarkable relation to Jesus Christ, point not obscurely to a time when the estrangement shall cease, and when all men shall understand the fervid words of the great apostle, "For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?"¹

Having thus presented the interpretation of this celebrated prophecy as applying to the coming and death of Jesus Christ, and the subsequent destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple by the Romans, we must now consider the very different exegesis which modern rationalism is obliged to give to it. According to the principles of this school, no part of the passage could have been written in advance of any event mentioned in it. If it would seem so, such coincidence is of no greater significance than those often made out in the forecastings of weather-prophets. The author, therefore, was a Jew of the Macabean period, whose object was to encourage his compatriots in their struggle with Antiochus Epiphanes, by means of a spurious prophecy which he ascribed to the venerated prophet of the Captivity. For this reason, we are to find the counterparts of its allusions in the events and persons of that far-off day. The experience of all ages and countries shows that in times of great public danger and disaster the production of similar fictions is very common, and at no other period of Jewish history

would they be so likely to assume the form of time-divisions and specific dates.

We find the first divergence in the rendering of the passage, which is made to read as follows: Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the word to build again Jerusalem till an anointed one, a prince, shall be seven weeks; and for threescore and two weeks shall it be rebuilt with streets and ditches, yet in troublous times. And after the threescore and two weeks, shall an anointed one be cut off, and have no successor, and the people of a prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary, and his end shall be as a flood—*i. e.*, sudden; and still to the end there is war, the close of desolations.¹

According to Bleek, the ablest writer of this school, the beginning of the seventy weeks dates from 606 B.C., the year of the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar. At that time, in the divine counsel, it was also decreed that the city should be rebuilt. The "anointed one" comes at the end of forty-nine years from the above date, instead of at the end of four hundred and eighty-five years, as in the other interpretation. He is Cyrus, the first patron of the Jews. The difficulty in regard to the time of the conquest of Babylon by this king, which was twenty-one years later than 606 B.C., is readily disposed of by ascribing to the author of this prediction ignorance on this important matter.

After this comes the period of sixty-two weeks, or four hundred and thirty-four years, which, according to this view, refers to the interval between Cyrus and Antiochus. But here, also, the time is too short by more than sixty years. This discrepancy is explained in like manner by the assumption that the Maccabean Jew who was the

¹ Dan. ix. 25, 26.

writer had no definite ideas on the subject of chronology in any of his time-divisions, until he reached the last seven years, which were in his own day.

It will be observed as well that, in this reading, the sixty-two weeks—or four hundred and thirty-four years—following upon the seven weeks which terminated with the reign of Cyrus, must be the period appointed for the rebuilding and fortifying of Jerusalem—a longer period, surely, than in the case of the reconstruction of any other known city. Moreover, this assertion is without the least foundation in fact. The supposed Maccabean author must have been well aware of the restoration of Jerusalem by Nehemiah, more than two hundred and sixty years before the reign of Antiochus. With the record of that transaction, made by this revered personage, in his hands, it is inconceivable that he should have stultified himself by the statement that the divinely ordained work would not be completed until after the lapse of four centuries from the going forth “of the commandment” for its consummation.

The author must further mean, as we shall see, that both Temple and city, the reconstruction of which latter was the work of four hundred and thirty years, were rebuilt only to be re-destroyed in the seven years following. It must have been an extraordinary strain upon the faith of his contemporaries, in God’s decree, to learn that such a length of time should be employed in its accomplishment, in order, apparently, that its results might be speedily brought to nought by the heathen king of Antioch.

The next task for this exegesis is to find the second “anointed one,” who is to be cut off at the end of the four hundred and thirty years, corresponding with the time of the advent of Antiochus. Here interpreters are divided between the claims of two persons who came to

violent deaths at about this period. Bleek, with a number of others, is in favor of Seleucus Philopater, king of Antioch, and brother of Antiochus Epiphanes, who was poisoned, after a reign of twelve years, by his treasurer, Heliodorus, who aimed to seize the throne for himself, while Antiochus was held as a hostage in Rome. The difficulty of accounting for the bestowal of the sacred title of Messiah upon one of the heathen oppressors of his people, by a Maccabean Jew, is surmounted by the application of the thoroughly German theory that the term Messiah had grown to mean with the later Jews any king or ruler. The main argument for this extraordinary statement is found in the book of Isaiah, where the Persian, Cyrus, is called the Lord's Messiah.

A sufficient answer to this is that Isaiah describes Cyrus as appearing in the character of God's chosen and foreordained instrument for the deliverance of his people from the Babylonish Captivity, and in that sense alone is he spoken of as consecrated by a divine appointment. If Seleucus were the Lord's anointed, Antiochus himself must have been such as well!

Other authorities, perceiving the awkwardness of making Messiahs out of the impious kings of Antioch, have referred the prophecy to the unfortunate Jewish high-priest, Onias III., who came to an untimely end in the following manner: Having succeeded to the high-priesthood on the death of his father, Simon II., about 198 B.C., he was at once embarrassed by the attempt of Seleucus Philopater to plunder the treasury of the Temple, which he averted with difficulty. On the death of Seleucus and the accession of Antiochus Epiphanes to the throne, Onias was displaced from office by his brother Jason, who, having bribed Antiochus to allow the crime, had him arrested and carried to Antioch. After a time,

Jason sent his younger brother, Menelaus, with the yearly tribute to that city. Finding Antiochus absent on a Parthian war, the latter conceived the project of putting both his brothers out of the way, and possessing himself of the high-priesthood. He therefore bribed Andronicus, the vicegerent of Antiochus, to murder Onias, and the outrage was accomplished. This thoroughly commonplace Eastern intrigue, one out of many similar political assassinations in the history of the times, is supposed to fulfil the high purposes of finishing transgression, making an end of sins and a reconciliation for iniquity, bringing in everlasting righteousness, and sealing up the vision and prophecy!

That neither dates, persons, characteristics, events, nor results come naturally together in these expositions is evident enough, not to mention the manifold wrestlings in grammatical construction required to make the passage read as desired. We need only state, in illustration, that Hitzig transfers the seven weeks into the middle of the sixty-two; that Wieseler places them at the end of the sixty-two; that Lengerke and Hilgenfeld do not know that they need be taken into account at all; while Eichhorn maintains "that the reckoning must be 'backwards and forwards'"—*i. e.*, seven weeks backward to Nebuchadnezzar, who is here called Messiah the Prince (!), who destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple about fifty-two years before the going forth of the edict of Cyrus. From this date must the reckoning of the sixty-two weeks be commenced. But, again, this must not be computed literally; for since the Jews reckoned *seventy* years instead of the true time, the point from which the estimate should begin is the fourth year of the reign of Jehoaikim.¹ From this onward the sixty-two weeks, or four hundred and

¹ Jer. xxv. 11, 12.

thirty-four years, brings us to the time of Antiochus Epiphanes!¹

We must observe, also, of this view, that it wholly overlooks the significance of the omission of the article in the mention of Messiah. This appears at once when its equivalent in English is employed—thus, “Know therefore and understand that from the going forth of the commandment unto Christ the prince . . . and after threescore and two weeks shall Christ be cut off,” etc. Is this rendering unfair? Did not the whole Hebrew nation so anticipate Messiah’s coming as the hope and consolation of the ages that when this title was used by itself no one could doubt the reference? How natural, nay, inevitable, this conclusion was to those belonging to the ancient, rather than to the modern world, is shown in the answer of the Samaritan woman to Christ: “The woman saith unto him, I know that Messiah cometh (which is called Christ): when he is come, he will declare unto us all things.”² A modern commentator might maintain that by the rules of grammar the woman may have meant only “I know that an anointed one (or *a* Christ) will come,” etc., but by the rules of common-sense her words can mean nothing less than *the* Messiah.

Equally difficult is it to explain, on this theory, the failure of the author to indicate that he spoke of two Messiahs; that the one mentioned first was a very different person, living in a very different age, from the Messiah of the sentence immediately following.³ That this point is, to the last degree, obscure, according to this rendering, is shown by the variety of Messiahs offered for our choice, from Nebuchadnezzar and Cyrus to Seleucus Philopater and Onias III.

The remainder of the prophecy is referred to Antiochus

¹ *Barnes's Notes*, Daniel, p. 384. ² John iv. 25, R. V. ³ Dan. ix. 26.

Epiphanes, the prince who should come with his army and destroy the city and the sanctuary. It is he also who, in the latter half of the last of the seventy weeks, after making a compact with his faction of Hellenizing Jews, should cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and should erect instead his idols upon the battlements of the Temple. To justify this explanation the familiar facts of the Maccabean war are cited. As already mentioned, Antiochus attacked and plundered Jerusalem, massacred many of the inhabitants, desecrated the Temple, and abolished its services. For three years and a half it was deserted, and then reconsecrated by Judas Maccabeus. During the war, Antiochus had a party of traitors among the Jews themselves, who sided with him, thus apostatizing from the faith and laws of their fathers.

The truth is that Antiochus destroyed neither city nor Temple, nor did he ever intend so doing. On the contrary, it is plain that his whole policy was to change Jerusalem into a Greek city, and make of the sanctuary a Greek temple of Jove, hoping in this way to alter the religion of the Jews by compelling them to conform to his Olympian heathenism. A Maccabean Jew, together with his people, would certainly have been aware of these facts. Why, then, should he not only write to the opposite effect, but also close this most melancholy prophecy without affording a single ray of consolation to his struggling compatriots?

Moreover, as in the case of the term Messiah, this interpretation sets aside the significance which words bear to Jewish ears, substituting Germanisms. To an ancient Hebrew, "the covenant" held a very different meaning from that which it holds to a German—a meaning which made it impossible for any man, much less an Antiochus, to "confirm" it. Consecrated by the memories of Abra-

ham, Isaac, and Jacob, the constant theme alike of prophet and psalmist, wherever the term occurs in Hebrew literature its divine associations are always the same; and it but reveals the ignorance of a foreigner to imagine that such a word could be used by a pious Jew to denote the shameful compact between odious apostates and a blasphemous heathen.

We have already dwelt fully upon the relation which the opening sentences of the prophecy bear upon the whole series of events prophesied. According to the Christian, each one of the objects to be attained follow directly upon the work and death of Christ. With one notable exception, no passage in the Old Testament states with such amplitude both the design and the results of the Redeemer's coming into the world.¹ As to the other interpretation, we may well ask how the protracted building of Jerusalem's fortifications; the advent of an anointed one, be he priest or king, Jewish or heathen prince; the murder of another anointed one; the making an alliance with corrupt Jews; the suspension of the daily sacrifice; and, finally, the destruction of city and Temple, can be regarded as restraining transgression, making a covering-over of sin and reconciliation for iniquity, bringing-in of everlasting righteousness, and the completing of all prophecy? It is difficult to imagine a connection more remote than that between the poisoning of Selencus or the murder of Onias and everlasting righteousness. Why should these great religious objects be attained any more effectually by the supposed destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple by Antiochus than they were by the real demolition of these by Nebuchadnezzar many years earlier? How could any earnest patriot in the Maccabean army nerve himself for conflict by the help of a prophecy prom-

¹ Isa. liii.

ising forgiveness of sins through the triumph of Antiochus over his countrymen and the annihilation of all that was dearest and most sacred to every true Israelite?

The difference between the two expositions is this: that of the Christian needs no complicated rendering of the words, to begin with, while fulfilling the whole spirit and intent of the prophecy, and its letter as well; that of the rationalist is compelled to resort to the most uncertain readings, with nothing at last to correspond either to the expressed meaning or statements of the passage.

CHAPTER XI.

MESSIANIC PROPHECIES IN THE PSALMS.

LIKE the Bible itself, the Book of the Psalms comes to us from the hands of many different authors, whose times extend over the entire period of Hebrew literature, from Moses to the generation after the Captivity. The Psalms thus reflect the manifold experiences of long ages, as these most deeply stirred the hearts of their writers. This alone, however, will not account for their lasting effect upon the world, nor explain why men of every age have found that when they also were deeply moved, they could then make most living appropriation of the Psalms to themselves. Rather it is that the Psalms speak for all men because they speak to God, so that but for their God these Hebrew lyrics would sink at once to the nothingness of mere literary interest, like that which pertains to the religious poetry of other ancient peoples. The earliest hymns of the Sanscrit Vedas, the Ionic hymn to Apollo, which is one of our earliest specimens of Greek composition, and the sacred odes of Rome, were each examples of the sentiment of worship finding expression in song. But the most defaced images in stone of the Grecian gods have more life in them than their hymns do, for not a human heart can respond, in our age, to one sentiment in them. The Hebrew Psalms, on the contrary, are now read the world over, at all hours of the day and night, whether in the assembly, or in the family, or in the inner chamber, and, most of all, at the bedside, when every other interest, except theirs, is departing.

The human power of the Psalms, in fact, is a witness to that "spirit of adoption" which turns man, whenever he feels his helplessness and want, towards his heavenly Father, for then he finds that the Psalms speak for him better than aught else. From this experience has come also that peculiarity of Christian hymnology which allows every one to share in the hymn just as if he had composed it himself, and for his own use. No one, for example, recalls the author of "Nearer, my God, to Thee" when that hymn is to be sung; and so with all widely used hymns we find that it is neither the occasion for which they were written nor the excellence of the versification which perpetuates the life of the hymn, but rather its resemblance to the sacred psalm, which speaks for all persons equally well. On the other hand, the greatest ode of antiquity, the *Carmen Seculare* of Horace, is nought but the brilliant stroke of a poet-laureate. The Ionic hymn is a festal song, celebrating the coming together of many Ionians from their island homes, and even the be-praised hymns of the Rig Veda never rise above thoughts of food and raiment. But of the psalm it truly may be said that one note thereof makes all the world kin, because of the divine sonship of the human race.

We mention this great feature of these sacred lyrics because of its important bearing on the supposed Messianic applications of many passages in them. It is remarkable that of all the quotations from the Old Testament made by apostolic writers as pertaining to Christ, nearly one half are from the Psalms.

It would seem, therefore, as if we were about to add a large number of Messianic prophecies to those which we have already investigated. But when we consider how the Psalms are always adapted to more than one speaker, we might expect that the prophetic element in them

would assume the type form of double reference, as it may be termed, more than in the case of any other prophetic portions of the Old Testament. The author of the psalm did not write for himself alone. His deepest-felt utterances may nevertheless find a heart still deeper than his to appropriate them, and hence, on this principle, the apostles were not wrong in claiming that Christ alone fulfilled the whole meaning of many passages in the Psalms, which yet were composed, in the first instance, for another than the Messiah.

Moreover, it should be remembered that the object and uses of these hymns would necessarily modify the prophetic element, if such existed in them, so that we would scarcely expect the definiteness of prediction which characterizes an Isaiah or a Daniel in productions which were to be sung in public worship. As the psalm expressed the aspirations of the heart directed towards God, so would the word of its prophecy come more like a suggestion to the devout worshipper, affording intimations for his receptive mind to follow up until it attained to a deeper knowledge. This educating function of the Psalmist is sometimes distinctly asserted as pertaining to his office. "I will open my mouth in a parable: I will utter dark sayings of old," is the preface to an ode which was intended for instruction as well as for edification.¹ The whole Jewish world, in fact, came in time to look upon the Psalms as embodying more prophecy than any other part of their Scriptures. Hence the New Testament writers did not import into the reading of the Psalms an element unknown to their countrymen. Instead, their use of the Psalms testifies to a prevalent Jewish conception of a constant oracular significance in them, which we, in modern times, often find difficult to admit.

¹ Psa. lxxviii. 2.

The Epistle to the Hebrews, for example, appeals to many passages in the Psalms as evidence to Jews of the claims of Jesus, and which shows that the Jews of that day were ready to see prophecy where we would not, or else the author would not have ventured to employ those passages as he does.

In some cases the Messianic citations from the Psalms, in the New Testament, even appear to be made for illustration only, just as we ourselves quote from Shakespeare or from the classics without a thought of prophecy, whether primary or secondary. On this account many modern authors deny the existence of any primary or intentional Messianic prophecies in the Psalms, and refer all supposed examples of the kind to something within the personal experience of the writer or of his age. But we hope to show that such reference is not always possible, and that in some, at least, of the Psalms, the application of the language to the Messiah, and to him alone, is fully demonstrable; so that their testimony strongly reinforces the cumulative argument from the Old Scriptures that Jesus is the Christ.

The Twenty-second Psalm.

The first psalm which we would cite for this purpose is the twenty-second. Taken in connection with the quotation of its opening words by Jesus as he was dying on the cross, two peculiar features in its composition become singularly significant. The first is that, as far as the twenty-second verse, the psalm reads wonderfully like a description of the Crucifixion, wrung from the victim himself; and then by a sudden transition it turns into a song of praise to God that this very scene should lead all the ends of the world to remember and turn unto the Lord, and all the kindreds of the nations to worship him.

The abruptness of its beginning is in keeping with the strongly dramatic or scenic style of the whole psalm. The exclamation, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring?" brings us at once to a scene of desertion to enemies and persecutors, the more dreadful because wholly unsustained by the one great stay of other martyrs. Though the sufferer's cry to God was constant (verses 2, 3), yet he met with no response from the High and Holy One who receives the praises of his people for his care of them. How different it was (verses 4, 5, 6) with the fathers who in former days of trouble had found him to be their deliverer! but he is like a worm rather than a man, a reproach of men, and despised of the people. All that witnessed his sufferings (verses 7, 8) laughed him to scorn, and insultingly told him to secure his deliverance then from the Lord, whom he had claimed to be delighted in him. Such, indeed, he asserts that he is (verses 9, 10), the chosen of God, and ever trusting in his protection from his birth. Therefore (verse 11) be not far from me, now that trouble has come upon me, with none to help!

A most remarkable description, as regards its details, is then given of the situation in which the sufferer is placed. He is surrounded (verses 12, 13) by fierce and savage enemies, likened to the strong bulls of Bashan, and as they compassed him about, they gaped upon him with their mouths as a ravening and a roaring lion. Meantime (verses 14, 15), he is as one whose life-blood is being poured out like water. His bones are out of joint: his heart melting like wax in the midst of his body; his strength is spent, and his tongue parched with intense thirst. For like ferocious dogs (verse 16) the company of the wicked have compassed him about, and have closed

around him, and have pierced his hands and his feet. The language of verse 17, "I may tell all my bones: they look and stare upon me," seems also to imply an unnatural strain upon his physical frame, like the previous phrase, "all my bones are out of joint;" and this is further borne out by the intimation of the next verse, that he was left naked by his enemies, who parted his garments among them, and cast lots upon his vesture, as the last act of indignity before he was to be put to death. Again, therefore (verses 19-21), he calls upon God to hasten and save his soul from utter destruction from his malignant and cruel enemies. The twenty-first verse should close this part of the psalm thus—"Save me from the lion's mouth, from the horns of the unicorns."

Then commences, with the same abruptness as at the first verse, the ascription of praise. Thou hast heard me! I will (therefore) declare (verse 22) thy name unto my brethren, *i. e.*, the Church or Israel of God. The term "congregation," as we will soon note, has a peculiar significance, and refers to the general assembly of the servants of God, both earthly and heavenly.¹ He who was but just now helpless in the midst of the assembled wicked, calls upon all who fear the Lord (verses 23, 24) to praise and glorify him, because he did not hide his face from him when he was the despised and afflicted one. Again, therefore, shall he praise God before the sacred congregation, for on this account shall the meek rejoice and be satisfied, and forever keep in heart (verse 25). Moreover (verse 27), all the ends of the world shall remember this event and turn unto Jehovah, and all the kindreds of the nations (Gentiles) shall worship him, for the kingdom is Jehovah's, and he is to reign over the nations. The rich, who have everything in the world, and the poor, who can

¹ Compare Heb. ii. 11, 12.

scarcely keep their souls alive (verse 29), shall alike bow before him. A people is to be born to God (verse 31) who shall serve him, and who shall declare to still remoter generations the righteousness of God who had done this.

We may well ask here the question of the Ethiopian eunuch, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself or of some other?¹ In the first place, there is a circumstantiality of detail in the description of the cruelties endured by the sufferer, which points to some definite scene of personal trial, rather than to anything of a general or typical character. The speaker is in a position from which he cannot escape; where he can be gazed at and mocked by the enemies who compass him on every side. He is stripped as one who is to be executed. His bones are out of joint, his heart is sinking, his strength is ebbing away, and he is tormented by intense thirst, while he is surrounded by savage, pagan² foes, who have pierced his hands and his feet. Neither this, nor anything like this, could have been said of David at any period of his life when he was in danger from his enemies, for he was persecuted, not because he was "despised of the people," but because he was so beloved of the people. Nor do we know of any one in Old Testament history to whom any experiences like these can be applied, even figuratively.

But a still more cogent proof that neither David nor any of the prophets could be meant is to be found in the emphatic announcement of the speaker, that this experience of his would be the occasion for all God's people to take courage, and for all the foreign peoples to be converted to the worship of Jehovah. By this event, also, would God's righteousness be revealed and made known

¹ Acts viii. 34.

² "Dogs" is a term descriptive, in Jewish idiom, of the heathen oppressors. Compare Mark vii. 27.

to the most distant generations. There is, therefore, a dignity and an importance about this suffering, which is to produce such world-wide and lasting effects, as cannot be predicated of any other suffering recorded in Old Testament history. Surely no one could imagine that David's afflictions, either from Saul or from Absalom, could be mentioned not only as causes of thanksgiving on the great day of assembly, but also as the comfort and stay of the meek, and the incentive to the Gentiles to turn to the God of the Hebrews. And if not of David, of whom else can this be said?

This feature of the psalm has proved a great embarrassment to the later rabbis, who have had to contend against its application by Christians to the profound impression on the world produced by the suffering and death of Jesus. In simple truth, the nations, even to the ends of the earth, have turned unto the worship of Jehovah on account of a personal experience by Jesus of exactly such trials as those here described. The most accepted interpretation among the Jews is, that the psalm was written by some one in Babylon, who speaks of Israel as a hind abandoned to the cruel heathen dogs, but who is yet to be preserved to be the means of converting the Gentiles. This interpretation is partly based upon the phrase "Aije-leth Shahar" in the heading prefixed to the psalm, and which is not translated in our version, but whose significance is taken to be "Hind of the morning."¹ But this explanation of such a general matter as the sufferings of a whole people leading to the world's conversion is wholly neutralized by the unmistakably individual and personal nature of the sufferings themselves. A people cannot be spoken of as enduring intense thirst, with bones out of

¹ See Margin. The heading is translated by Perowne: For the Precentor. To the melody, "The Hind of the Dawn." A psalm of David.

joint, hands and feet pierced, and with vesture given over to the lot. Nor can any of these expressions be forced into harmony with the figure of a hind surrounded by wild beasts, without ascribing a poverty of expression to the author which is wholly out of keeping with the excellence of style, which is freely admitted by scholars of all shades of opinion as a characteristic of the whole psalm, and which Ewald declares truly to be unsurpassable.

It should be mentioned also that a most determined effort has been made by the later Jews to set aside the reading of the word "pierced" in the sixteenth verse. Thus, the Hebrew copyists or editors of the sacred text, called the Masorites, and whose school flourished at Tiberias between the seventh and eleventh centuries after Christ, by a particular "pointing," as it is termed in Hebrew writing, gave the word the meaning of "a lion," as it is rendered correctly in Isaiah xxxviii. 13. Hence the sentence would mean, according to this interpretation, "as a lion they surround my hands and my feet." This wording, however, does not make sense, for the whole passage would then read—"the assembly of the wicked have enclosed me, as a lion my hands and my feet." A lion could hardly be spoken of as surrounding or encompassing the hands and the feet, nor, for that matter, the assembly of the wicked either; so that the expression is wholly unnatural in either case. But a still more conclusive objection to this comparatively late reading, which so plainly indicates the influence of controversy, is, that all the ancient versions of the Old Testament, made centuries before the labors of the Masorites, and all ancient interpreters, Jewish as well as Christian, render the word as a verb, and not as a noun. Thus, the Septuagint, which in this instance must be an impartial witness, translate it by the Greek word "they pierced." It is thus rendered also in

the early Jewish text called the Masora Parva. In the Arabic version it reads "they perforated." Moreover, Aquila, a celebrated Jewish scholar of the second century, renders this word as a verb, with the meaning "to bind;" *i. e.*, they "bind my hands and my feet." As Aquila's special object in his Greek version of the Old Testament was to oppose the Christians who made such use of the Septuagint, it is plain that if he knew of such a rendering as "a lion," assuredly he would have used it.

Against the theory of this psalm being composed in Babylon, it is sufficient to say that both its language and allusions are inconsistent with such a late date. Rationalistic scholars, like Ewald, Hupfeld, and others, show that its references to the general assembly, or the great congregation, prove that it must have been composed while the Temple, or Tabernacle, was yet standing. To the mind of the ancient Hebrew, the imposing gathering of the whole nation before the Lord three times a year, as commanded by Moses, constituted the most august and solemn scene on earth. To be excluded from that assembly, by any cause, was to experience the heaviest sorrow of life.¹ It is this conception which suggests the striking figure in the Epistle to the Hebrews:² "But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect." For the great congregation only the most important announcements would be in keeping, and it is there that the Psalmist declares that he shall speak of his sufferings and of his deliverance, as redounding to the world praise of Jehovah, and as revealing God's righteousness to the end of time.

¹ Compare the beautiful language of *Psa.* xlii. 1-4. ² *Heb.* xii. 22, 23.

We need not wonder, therefore, that the Evangelists in the New Testament have this psalm so constantly in mind as they depict the scene of the crucifixion. Besides the quotation of the first verse, the sixth, seventh, and eighth verses of the psalm, which read, "But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people. All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, He trusted on the Lord that he would deliver him: Let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him," are reproduced by Matthew historically thus:¹ "And they that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads, and saying, Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross. Likewise also the chief priests mocking him, with the scribes and elders, said, He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him. He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him; for he said, I am the Son of God." Mark and Luke also depict the scene in the same terms. The intense thirst described in verse 15 of the psalm is referred to in John xix. 28, and the parting of the garments in John xix. 23. The piercing of the hands is illustrated by John in his account of the unbelief of Thomas, when he said, "Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe."² That they had full warrant in claiming the whole psalm as one continued prophecy of the cross of Christ, to the preaching of which they devoted their lives, every Christian must acknowledge, when one of the most pronounced of modern rationalists, Hupfeld, is constrained to say that it contains "certainly the most

¹ Matt. xxvii. 39-43.

² John xx. 25.

striking coincidence of details with the history of the Passion."

The Hundred and Tenth Psalm.

So often does the portraiture of the Messiah in the Old Testament present the strangest contrasts—now of great humiliation and suffering, and now of great exaltation—that a belief in the coming of two Messiahs very naturally arose among the ancient Jews to harmonize such divergent predictions. This apparent contradiction meets us sometimes even in the same prophecy, as in Isaiah lii., liii., where the servant of Jehovah is to prosper, and be extolled, and be very high; and also be the despised one, the rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. But just such contrasts we find likewise in those psalms which the ancient Jews, as well as the Christian Church, have regarded as prophetic of the Messiah; and hence we have chosen to place for illustration a psalm of exaltation, the One Hundred and Tenth, in immediate succession to the Twenty-second.

The form of this psalm is specially Messianic, for, like others of its class, as the Second, Twenty-second, and Forty-fifth, it departs from the great body of the psalms in being neither a prayer nor a meditation. It expresses no personal needs, nor aspirations, nor feelings. Its one subject is Jehovah's priest-king of Zion. The diction is highly oracular and dramatic, and occasionally obliges the reader to supply the ellipses caused by those rapid changes in the subject which are so characteristic of Hebrew prophetic poetry.¹ For the sake of clearness, therefore, we would render this psalm thus:

"Jehovah said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand,
Until I make thine enemies thy footstool.

¹ Compare the remarks on the style of Micah and of Isaiah, pp. 180, 252.

Jehovah shall send the rod of thy strength [thy mighty sceptre] out of Zion,

(Saying) Rule thou in the midst of thine enemies.

Thy people shall willingly offer themselves in the day of thy might (in war),

(Clad) in holy robes. And as the dew from the womb of the morning,

(So) is the host of thy youth (warriors).

“Jehovah hath sworn, and will not repent, (saying)

Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.

“The Lord at thy right hand shall strike down kings in the day of his wrath.

He shall judge among the nations, he shall fill (the plain) with the dead bodies.

He shall wound the heads over great countries.

He shall drink of the brook in the way,

Therefore shall he lift up the head.”

The rationalistic interpretation of this remarkable psalm is that of a martial ode addressed to some Hebrew king on the eve of a conflict with foreign foes. Its author may have lived in the times of Azariah—Uzziah—and so addressed these patriotic lines to that warlike king as he marched to oppose the invasion of Tiglath Pileser II.,¹ for in that age each monarch ascribed his power and his victories to the national god, who was also the patron deity of his capital. The poet likens the great array of the king's army to the resplendent and glittering dew, because of the countless number of its flashing spears. He then sees the rout of the enemy, leaving the field covered with corpses, and the rulers over many countries wounded and flying; while Zion's monarch gains fresh strength for the pursuit as he drinks of the brook by the way.

That this imagery is quite warlike, and seems drawn from the physical contests which David and Uzziah knew so well, may be freely admitted without invalidating the statement that, nevertheless, the Psalmist could not have

¹ See p. 196.

had in view any earthly hero warring with earthly weapons, because the central thought of the poem wholly forbids such a conclusion. The order in which the various parts of the picture are related to this central theme shows this. First, the Psalmist sees his Lord called by Jehovah to take the seat of sovereignty at his side, and thus share the government with him. He then beholds a great army willingly offering themselves for the war to their Lord; but, instead of a mail-clad, it is a priest-clad host. Then it is that he hears again the voice of Jehovah, with solemn oath, appointing his Lord to an eternal priesthood, after a wholly different order from the national line of Aaron; and then, upon his appointment to the priesthood of Melchizedek, follows his world conquest by means of his priestly army. The eternal priesthood of the Psalmist's Lord is thus the theme of this ode, and hence its true interpretation must turn upon the conception which an ancient Hebrew writer would have of what it was to be a priest forever to Jehovah.

If it could be shown that the conception of the priest's office among the ancient Hebrews was not a very definite one, but partook of the admixture of function so common among other old nations, then this psalm might be looked upon as a relic of those times when the nation regarded its monarch as priest, warrior, and king all in one. Some modern critics have endeavored to prove that during the times of Saul, David, and Solomon the Hebrew kings were regarded as priests, and as priests offered sacrifices, just as the kings of other countries then united in their own persons the highest sacred as well as political offices. Even in our day European monarchs claim the visible headship of religion as their inherent prerogative, and hence it is asked why should this psalm not belong to the commonplace in history, when it speaks of the exalted priesthood of Zion's warring king?

This view, however, is vitiated throughout by the absurd assumption that the ancient Hebrews were like other ancient peoples in the nature and origin of their religion. How little ground there is for any such assumption the following considerations show. The science of comparative mythology, we are told, is based upon the principle that all religions were originally evolved by the races who first held them, in obedience to their religious instincts; in other words, men always made their own religions, and hence the invariable rule that, "Like priest, like god;" and, conversely, "Like god, like priest." Jehovah, therefore, though so widely worshipped now, is yet only a survival of many former Syrian deities, like the Remphans, Chemoshes, and Nisrochs, who have become extinct because, though products of the same country and of races nearly related to the Hebrews, yet they were not equally fit with Jehovah to survive the changes of history. But, as the Hebrews could have no radically different source for their thoughts of God than other nations in similar circumstances, it certainly follows that a Jehovah priest should be classed with the other priests of historic peoples. The functions of such priests were essentially similar. They performed the rites of public worship in offering sacrifices to the national gods, and implored their favor in peace and their assistance in war; while to their order belonged the interpretation of oracles, dreams, or omens, and sometimes the practice of medicine as well. In their relations to the state they lent the aid of the religious sentiment and tradition to support the magistrate, so that even such a cool unbeliever as Julius Cæsar put on the robes of supreme pontiff in Rome.

But if history ever determined anything, its verdict on this subject is decisive. Spite of all efforts to derive the Hebrew religion, and the peculiar principle of its priest-

hood, from the same old source as the other religions, with their priests, no one can confound the revelation of Sinai with the imaginings of ancient heathen of any kind or name. No ancient people ascended anywhere near to the Hebrew conception of the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy.¹ Thus, it is vain to ascribe to the mysterious Egyptian or to the sage Hindoo a greater capacity for high ideals than to the Greek; for if by wisdom God could be found, we might trust the Greek to do that as well as any hypothetical Egyptian, Babylonian, or Indian. But the Greek utterly failed both to appreciate a holy God and to feel the deep evil of sin. On the other hand, how could we expect to find, on natural principles, among the crowd of Moabites, Ammonites, Philistines, and Syrians, with their horrible gods, a moun-

¹ There prevails at present much unscientific reading into ancient thought of monotheistic ideas, notably in speculations on the primitive religious conceptions of the Egyptians, as these are doubtfully deciphered from the papyri. But true monotheism, sufficiently definite to constitute a religion, is of Shemitic origin only, for no record of even one generation of Egyptian or of Hindoo Unitarians has been found in papyri, in verse, or on stone. If the Egyptians had a conception of one God, it was the thoroughly commonplace idea of a Beginner; for this simple conception is easier than a multiple one, to start with, in any system of things. With the Egyptians, the Beginner, however, almost immediately became double, both father and mother, and then originated the first of the many triads of Egyptian mythology, of father, mother, and son.—De Rougé, “*Études sur le Rituel Funéraire.*” But this conception is no better than the American Indian’s Great Spirit, about whom so much poetic nonsense has been written, as if savage ideals can rise higher than savage minds. It is an advance, and not a retrogression, when, from such shadowy concepts as that, men create for themselves a crowd of more objective deities, as the Greeks did, and as men invariably do with their first building of towns and cities. Later on, both on the Nile and on the Ganges, pantheism may have displaced polytheism in the schools; but this theological development also is thoroughly commonplace. A primeval Beginner, then gods many, and then an All-God, are each natural sequences in certain stages of human thinking; but not one of these, as every one knows, comes near the God of the Hebrews, Christians, and Mohammedans.

tain tribe which could think out Jehovah, and create a priest to correspond? The truth is that the Hebrew theological idea stands alone as a fact in history, like the survival of the race itself throughout the ages, and consistently refuses to be reduced to a common origin with the spontaneous religions of the other races. So foreign, indeed, was it to the spirit of the age among the Hebrews themselves, that only with difficulty did it hold its own against the religions of their neighbors. But, as we have remarked before, however the people were tempted to apostatize from Jehovah, they never confounded Jehovah, after Sinai, with any other god. At no time, therefore, in the history of the nation would the contemporary of a Samuel, a David, or a Hezekiah regard a priest of Jehovah as at all similar to the priest of a Memphite, Babylonian, or Homeric god. It is even discreditable to one's intelligence not to see that the Hebrew idea was then solitary in the world, because that explains its solitariness now, with all its once competitive religions long gone, and forever dead.

The priest of Jehovah, therefore, always differed as much from a priest of Bel, or of Apollo, as Jehovah himself differed from the idols. In the Hebrew religion neither God nor man were conceived of according to heathen thought, for the priest who offered the Lord's sacrifice received his appointment to do so not simply to fulfil a part in ritual, but because there must be a mediator between erring, sinful man and Him who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity. In fundamental contrast to this, no ancient religion of East or West had any vital connection with righteousness. Their gods were often personifications of the most wicked thoughts of men, so that some Greek philosophers, like Anaxagoras, charged the gods with being the corrupters of the human

race. Without thought of holiness, or even of goodness, in their deities, they could have no thought of repentance for sin, or of newness of life, as having any connection with their religion or with their priests. Those ideas, which were to renovate the world, were yet limited to the shrine which the Israelite approached, and where he slowly learned the great lesson that infinite holiness, which by no means would clear the guilty, nevertheless had provided the atoning priest for him on account of infinite mercy. It is thus the conception of God and of sin which distinguishes the position of the priest of Jehovah from all others, and hence it has taken the world many centuries of both Jewish and Christian teaching to learn the meaning of an eternal High-priest for mankind.

This Hebrew psalm, therefore, cannot possibly be reduced to the likeness of a pagan royal panegyric with any regard to historic truth. Other races might ascribe to their monarchs every honor, that of eternal priest included, because they could bring their gods down so low as to raise their kings into gods, and both address and worship mortal men as such. This they did because they were, what no psalmist ever was, only heathen, and had never learned to look for God much higher than man's level. But to a Hebrew this was impossible, as it is now to a Christian or to a Mohammedan. But equally difficult is it in the Shemitic revelation to advance man to an official partnership with God. Man, in Shemitic faiths, may towards *men* hold a delegated divine relation, whether as king, high-priest, pope, or caliph, but towards God he shrinks at once to the level of other mortal men, and can be no higher than the meanest of his earthly fellows. Even in the lowest of Shemitic religions no sultan would have ventured to speak of himself, or allow others to speak of him, as sitting on the right hand of God.

The whole ancient Jewish world, therefore, felt that the words addressed to the Psalmist's Lord here, "Sit thou at my right hand! Thou art a priest forever," and finally the undoubted official use of the term "the Lord," in verse 5—nowhere else so employed in the Old Testament except in a divine sense—all show that no earthly king or earthly high-priest is the subject of the psalm. A greater than human dignity is associated inevitably with such language. It was therefore shown, even by some of the later rabbis, that the best comment on this passage is to be found in Daniel vii. 13, 14, where "One like the Son of man" comes with the clouds of heaven, and is brought unto the Ancient of Days, and there is "given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve him." As Perowne remarks, "The two passages, the one from the Psalm and the other from Daniel, are, in fact, combined by our Lord himself, when, standing before the high-priest, he says, 'Hereafter ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of God, and coming in the clouds of heaven.'"¹

It is this evident ascription of superhuman honors to the Psalmist's Lord which gives its force to the question of Jesus to the Pharisees, "How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool? If David then call him Lord, how is he his son?"² The reason of their inability to answer was that this psalm was still a prophecy to them, which could be understood only when fulfilled in the revelation of the Messiah, for otherwise no Jew could conceive the idea of the modern rationalist, that this psalm was written in praise of an earthly monarch, nor did they know of any

¹ "Book of Psalms," p. 549, 2d ed.

² Matt. xxii. 43-45.

reason to doubt that David was its author. A king, however, who should share the government with Jehovah, and be also a high-priest who should never die, so unlike one born of the line of Aaron, might well perplex the scribes and doctors of the law.

It is important to note that the title king is not once applied in this psalm to him who is the subject of it. It is his priestly office, instead, which is directly mentioned. In the Hebrew system the two offices of king and of high-priest were always mutually exclusive of each other. The priests came only of the family of Aaron, and so jealously was their hereditary prerogative guarded that we read of King Uzziah's leprosy being sent upon him because he unlawfully attempted, not to sacrifice, but only to burn the incense before the altar of Jehovah.¹ Meantime the priest, by the nature of his duties, and even by his dress, was removed as far as possible from all association with war or politics. It is a weak objection to this statement to cite the language of 2 Samuel vi. 14-18, where it is said that David danced before the ark, girded with a linen ephod, and that he offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the Lord, for this might be said of all those who brought the animals to the priests to sacrifice, that they offered them. The wearing of an ephod also can hardly be taken as making David a priest, any more than it made Samuel a priest when he was yet but a child.² Its significance in both these cases was that they were, each of them, engaged at the time in a sacred or holy work.

On this account we can the better appreciate the significance of the vision of the army which the Psalmist sees assembling to his Lord's standard. The phrase, "beauties of holiness," is very generally interpreted by

¹ 2 Chron. xxvi. 16-21.

² 1 Sam. ii. 18.

commentators as descriptive of the holy or priestly garments which his soldiers wore. Rationalistic writers evade the spiritual meaning of such a description by alleging that all Israel was regarded as a nation of priests, according to the verse, "Ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation," and that the Psalmist means only a truly national muster of the heartily united Hebrews to a holy war against the heathen.¹ This exposition, however, only shows that rationalists, as well as others, can quote texts. In its original connection this text has no more military reference than the figure just preceding it—of the Lord's bearing Israel on eagle's wings—should be taken as a piece of inspired natural history on the habits of eagles with their young. For we may well ask when did a Hebrew army, or any other army, array itself for battle in priestly robes, so as to suggest such a figure in a martial ode? Once, indeed, and only once in its history, was an attempt made to convert the national army into something like the great congregation at the tabernacle, when the corrupt priests, sons of Eli, brought the ark into the camp; but the nation never forgot afterwards the terrible lesson which followed.

When we turn, however, to consider the application of this psalm as a prophecy of Christ, the deeper and more complete grows the correspondence, just where, on any other exposition, we find only divergence. Thus, in Christ alone do we find the exalted personality who is seen by the Psalmist, and who receives by right both divine title and divine homage. Of no other than he, in the history of the world, have the conceptions of his nature and of his relation to mankind been so closely parallel to the expressions of this psalm. To no one like him, to no name like his, have the hearts of such multitudes of men

¹ Exod. xix. 6.

gone out with such willing devotion, even to death, in his service. That service also has ever been a holy service; never so much his as when it appears in the beauty of holiness alone. But, above all, have multitudes without number, throughout the ages, rejoiced in him as their eternal High-priest before God, because, instead of the limited and national order of Aaron, his is the order of Melchizedek, who was priest of the Most High God even before Abraham, and thus represented the original world of all nations. It is the distinctively Christian conception of Jesus that he ever sits at the right hand of the Majesty on High, both to intercede for his people and to guide them on through every trial and conflict here below.

We are told, however, that the scenes of war in this psalm, the battle-field covered with the slain, and the relentless pursuit of the enemy afterwards, all belong to the conception of a mere earthly conqueror, and are strangely below the thought of that kingdom of heaven over which Jesus reigns as Prince of Peace. The answer to this is that Jesus himself did not think so; for he significantly quoted this psalm to his opponents, evidently with a reference of it to himself, and as a warning, therefore, to them. Has Jesus, the Prince of Peace, in truth sent peace on earth, or a sword? When have the "people" of Jesus, also, not been in conflict? Physical battle-fields, after all, are only types of the mightier conflicts in the spiritual world, and so, through all the centuries since the first conflict with the Pharisees and the other powers of this world, the field is strewn with the remains of host upon host of the enemies of the Lord's Christ; nor will the contest cease until every enemy shall be put under his feet.

The Second Psalm.

This psalm is very similar in tone to the One Hundred and Tenth, for while that tells of the divine appointment of the Lord's Christ as High-priest forever, this declares his divine appointment as king of the world. In style it is highly dramatic, and in four stanzas skilfully presents each change of subject by different speakers, who successively take their parts.

In the first stanza, from verse 1 to 3, the Psalmist wonderingly asks, Why do the heathen tumultuously assemble and meditate a vain undertaking? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against Jehovah and against his Messiah, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us.

In the second stanza, from verse 4 to 6, Jehovah is seen on his throne in heaven, looking down in derision on this impotent rebellion, until he speaks in wrath and makes them tremble in his sore displeasure [as he says]—But *I* [intensive pronoun] have set my king upon Zion, the hill of my holiness.

In the third stanza—verses 7-9—the Messiah himself speaks to his misguided opponents, announcing the divine decree by which all dominion becomes his by right, and with power to crush all who resist him. I will tell of a decree: Jehovah said unto me, "Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel."

In the fourth stanza—verses 10-12—the Psalmist again speaks, and counsels the rebels therefore to submit to

Jehovah, and do homage to the Son of God, their rightful and irresistible ruler. "Be wise now, therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve Jehovah with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish [in your way]." For soon is his wrath kindled. "Blessed are all they that put their trust in him."

In this psalm we find, for the first time, two of the titles which afterwards became distinctively applied to the Hope of Israel, namely, the Messiah, and the Son of God. They were both joined together, as was customary in that day, by the high-priest, when he put the question to Jesus, "Tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God?"¹ The early Jews, without hesitation, regarded this psalm as exclusively Messianic, but later rabbis have endeavored to change its application to David, in two instances, however, avowedly on account of the use made by Christians of the more ancient interpretation. In this, of course, they have the help of modern rationalists, some of whom, with characteristic freedom of range, suggest Solomon, Hezekiah, or the inevitable Maccabees, instead of David.

Those who refer it to David generally suppose the psalm to commemorate that part of his career when, having become firmly established on his throne, he began his conquests of the surrounding nations, like Philistia, Ammon, Syria, and their confederates, as we read more especially in 2 Samuel, chap. x. This was after he made Jerusalem his capital, and, by erecting the tabernacle with the ark on Zion, had given to that hill its long-consecrated name. On this interpretation this psalm turns into an ordinary, high-sounding, Oriental proclamation to the kings and rulers of the then known world to submit themselves without further delay to King David, before

¹ Matt. xxvi. 63.

he broke them with a rod of iron, and dashed them in pieces like a potter's vessel.

The interpreters, however, who adopt this view, find themselves, if Jews, much embarrassed on religious, and if rationalists, on historical, grounds, with the evident superhuman dignity of the King of Zion in this psalm. The element of heavenly exaltation, indeed, is even more pronounced here than in the One Hundred and Tenth Psalm, on account of the remarkable use of the term Son. For if David either used it as a title for himself, or the Hebrews themselves consciously admitted its use for him in a sacred hymn, then there was no real distinction between their Jehovah religion and the Olympian religion of Antiochus Epiphanes and of the Roman Cæsars. There can be no honest escape from such a conclusion, because it is not based upon the singularity of the use of the term, that aside from this psalm we do not find the Son of God named again in the Old Testament, except in Daniel iii. 25, and then only as the exclamation of a heathen.

Nor is it a question of Hebrew grammar which decides the significance of the name, for it is rather settled by that wider law of language which no tongue ever violates. That law is that no term is so definite as the commonest of terms when it is chosen as a designation. Thus, a child of Spain or of France is no designation, but The Child of Spain or of France is the most august official title which it was thought possible to devise for him to whom the throne in prospect belonged. "The man of the age" has no fellow among the millions of that age. Hence the text, "Kiss [or do homage to] the Son," can in no language be made to mean that the King of Zion is *a* son of God, but only The Son. If, therefore, the writer of this psalm meant David by this name, he was as much a heathen as the poets who in the poor days of Greece sang

the praises of Demetrius Poliorketes Theos, or of Antiochus Theos. It was, therefore, by deep design that the high-priest, when the witnesses had failed, hoped himself to secure a charge of blasphemy against Jesus by means of this psalm. He would never have thought of doing so if it was not felt by all that "The Son" of the Second Psalm was far differently related to God than any mere man, though he were David himself.

The distinct individuality of the Son in this psalm forbids us also from interpreting the term in a general or dynastic sense. Thus we cannot confound the subject of this psalm with the promise to the House of David contained in 2 Samuel vii. 14, where God is represented as saying of each reigning king of that line, "I will be his father, and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men," etc., for the Son speaks of himself alone, in the words, Jehovah said unto me, "Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee," and no exposition can make such language apply to any succession of individuals whatever. The entire reference of the poem, in fact, is too personal to allow of this interpretation being maintained by any considerable body of scholars.

The ascription of divine dignity to the king is, moreover, borne out by the whole conception of the psalm, which is not political, but religious. It is against Jehovah, in the first instance, and his Messiah that the heathen rage, while the kings and rulers aim to free themselves of their joint service. The Psalmist exhorts them, therefore, first, to cease being heathen, and to rejoice in a conversion to the worship of the One God of the Hebrews. But this language removes us altogether from the principles and practice of David's historical time. He never attempted to exact more of the vanquished heathen than to pay tribute, and in some cases to receive a garrison

from him into their cities. Nothing was done by him, or by Solomon, to substitute the worship of Jehovah among them for that of their deities, but each tribe was left, as was the universal custom in that age, to its own national form of religion. But in this psalm the action is very different. It is against Jehovah himself that the world rises in rebellion, and against his Son, because he is Jehovah's. The Son also claims the dominion through his relation to Jehovah, and finally the Psalmist counsels submission to God first, as the necessary prelude to doing homage to the Son. Such language cannot mean the political submission of the heathen to the King of Zion only, but rather their allegiance to the God of Zion, to whom they are invited to turn with joyful hearts, for it is nowhere in the Bible counselled to compel men by the sword to worship the true God. At the same time serving Jehovah and the Son are inseparably united by the Psalmist as both the same acts in nature.

This share of the Son in divine honor and prerogative is further implied in the last word of the psalm, "Blessed are all they that put their trust in him." It is difficult to evade the force of this expression, for the words "to bless" are peculiar to the religion of the Old Testament and its derived faiths, and always have a divine reference. No heathen language has a word which is its just equivalent, and hence the Christian religion has been obliged to import its meaning into Gentile speech in every instance. The Greek *μάκαρος* means only to be happy in passive enjoyment; the Latin *beatus* is to be rich, fortunate, and thus happy. But a man may be truly blessed and yet not be happy. The text "blessed are they that mourn," carries us far above the Greek Isles of the *Μακάριοι*, or the Latin *beati possidentes*. Even the dying blessing of the father of the house carried its significance, because it

was thought to come with the sanction of the Holy Spirit of God. Therefore, to share the power to make men blessed in their trust upon him, one must share, in some way, the attribute of the God of heaven. The total inapplicability of such a word to a trust in human prince, though he be a David, or a Solomon, or a Hezekiah, is felt at once by every reader of the Bible.

The bearing of all these expressions upon the true interpretation of the remarkable language of the seventh verse, I will declare a decree: Jehovah said unto me, "Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee," is obvious. Relatively to the world addressed, "this day" was the day when the speaker was manifested to it by some unmistakable sign or seal as the Son of God.¹ The term "begotten," therefore, can mean only a special relation of derivation or dependence. It is often so used figuratively in the Old Testament, as "Of the Rock that begat thee thou art unmindful,"² Saying unto a block [idol], Thou art my father, thou hast begotten me.³ This text, therefore, cannot be used to support the doctrine of the Trinity, except inferentially, from its inapplicability, as we have seen, to the human founder of a dynasty, like David. Still less could it pass by titular right to the kings in Zion after him. On the other hand, the necessary mental associations connected with any conception of the Messiah lead inevitably to a king who is more than human, because his kingdom is not to end. In the One Hundredth and Tenth Psalm he is to be a priest forever. But he must be also a deathless king, for otherwise, if the Son of David would be only like the other royal sons of David, then his reign, however long continued or widely extended, would, like every earthly reign, appear but as a speck in the course of time. His day would be but the

¹ Rom. i. 4.

² Deut. xxxii. 18.

³ Jer. ii. 27.

brief day of a man, which relatively to human history is only like a leaf in a forest. How could Messiah's kingdom pass to a successor and still be his? Rather, the day when he set up his kingdom on earth was the beginning of a rule against which mortal kings might set themselves, but which must endure, through every opposition, from age to age.

It must not be forgotten that the conception of a Coming One into the world, whether mistaken or not, is a majestic thought, and hence would find for its expression language of the highest. As a matter of fact the language of Christendom about Jesus is the loftiest ever used about any man. It has a totally different meaning, and therefore is not the same in any sense, with the low words which an abject heathen like Cicero used when he addressed Julius Cæsar as a god. So here, by anticipation, is the diction of this striking psalm. Abrupt, powerful, and weighted with command, its royal tone becomes altogether Christian as it shows the King of Zion assuming the universal heirship of the Son of God. It is, therefore, altogether a mistake to deny the application of this psalm to the kingdom which Jesus set up on earth on the ground that its spirit is warlike and unsuited to the glad tidings of peace and good-will to men. Whoever says this forgets history, for what does it show but a repetition of vain revolts and struggles against that kingdom which, in simple truth, has been, above all others, the most abiding cause of strife among men. Jesus himself spoke just like the king of this psalm. He who could say, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away," "Ye shall be brought before rulers and kings for a testimony against them," spoke as if the whole world of time was given him as a possession, as well as the uttermost parts of the earth!

The Forty-fifth Psalm.

The examination of the language of the One Hundred and Tenth and Second Psalms, which we have been conducting, when taken in connection with the Forty-fifth, distinctly raises the question of the divinity of the Messiah. From the earliest times the Jews regarded the Forty-fifth Psalm as applicable exclusively to the promised King of Israel. Thus the Chaldaic paraphrase renders the second verse, "Thy beauty, O King Messiah, is greater than that of the sons of men." Even later rabbis, who seem to have the fear of the Christians ever before their eyes, yet take the same view. The testimony of the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews must also be noted, for when he quotes the sixth and seventh verses of this psalm, it is for the purpose of showing the divine nature of Christ, which he scarcely would have done if this psalm was not then generally regarded as descriptive of the Messiah.¹ The relation, therefore, which the central figure of each of these three psalms is represented to hold towards God is so exceptional in kind, that in the Christian argument the objector must explain why they do not support the doctrine of Jesus as the Son, and as God. As we have often remarked, the argument is that every statement of the New Testament about Christ is supported by prophecy of the Messiah in the Old Testament. But so far does the doctrine of the divinity of Christ overshadow in importance all others, that without a correspondence to it be found plainly in the alleged prophetic portrait of him, it is doubtful if the whole argument would not appear fatally weakened by the deficiency. This no one can say if these three psalms were

¹ Heb. i. 8, 9.

intended to refer to the Messiah, and hence the objector must show that they have no such reference ere he can evade the force of the conclusion.

To begin with, we may state that there is, and can be, no controversy as to the nature of this poem. It is a marriage song, celebrating the nuptials of a mighty king and glorious queen. As such it stands alone in the whole collection of these sacred lyrics. Hence, if it has no religious meaning, it is very difficult to account for its presence among the other hundred and forty-nine odes of the book, which are all of such a totally different character. It would be then as much out of place as a similar piece of poetry would be in a Christian hymn-book. The only supposition which can be adopted about it, on the hypothesis that its author only meant to celebrate a royal wedding, is that the subsequent compilers of the Book of the Psalms wholly mistook his intention, and gave it a sacred meaning, which would allow of its juxtaposition with the forty-sixth, or the other psalms among which it occurs. The bearing of this fact is too often overlooked by writers who, in commenting on this psalm, speak as if the psalms were a miscellaneous collection of Hebrew lyrics on a great variety of subjects. On the contrary, it is impossible to conceive of a more specific and uniformly religious collection than they are, in which the heart is moved solely by devout thought of God. In the psalms, with the significant exception of this one, and the two which we have just been examining, men are constantly in the divine presence alone, and never else than in the attitude of worship, prayer, or praise. All national or personal concerns, however full the psalm may be of them, are laid before God, and before him only. How, therefore, on any ordinary principles, a mere wedding-song in

celebration of an earthly marriage—even, as some would have it, the marriage of the Persian wretch Xerxes with Esther, would be found, or would be left in such association, we are not informed.

This difficulty, moreover, increases with each step in the investigation of the expressions employed about the king. He is addressed as fairer than the children of men, and for the gracious words of his lips God hath blessed him forever. He is told to go forth as a mighty champion, to use his sword in behalf of truth, of meekness, and of righteousness, and cause the nations to fall before his irresistible arms. Then is he directly addressed thus, “Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever! The sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre. Thou lovest righteousness and hatest wickedness. Therefore, God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows!”

If these words were meant for Solomon, on the occasion of his marriage with Pharaoh’s daughter, as many expositors maintain, we may again ask what becomes of the rest of the Old Testament? Who may not be God then? If Solomon could be called God on his wedding, why not always, at least on public occasions? And if Solomon, why not each and every king down to the Herod whom the angel smote?¹ When we consider the tendency of the times, could anything serve better than such a song to make the Chosen People as thorough heathen as the world could show? But admitting that a court minstrel of Solomon’s might write these words without being stoned, how came the Israelitish Church, which was taught such high conceptions of God by the prophets, to incorporate this impious ode in her wonderful book of divine praise?

¹ Acts xii. 21–23.

The distance between the mind which could speak of Solomon as a god, and the mind of the writer of the Ninetieth Psalm, for example, is so immeasurable that some intermediate links of belief or of conception should be found in the history. We should be able to trace in the Old Testament a regular evolution from this grovelling pagan panegyrist up to him who could say, "Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God!" The same unique, lofty, unapproachable conception of the One God meets us, whatever the passage or whatever the age, and until this fact is disposed of, the candid mind must demand some other explanation of these words than that they belong to the sad examples in history of the disintegration of faith. For it must not be forgotten that men are made gods only in times of religious wreck. It is when a religion is not only dead, but decomposing, as it was in the decline of Greece, and afterwards in Rome, that deity is stripped of all reverence by man worship, and associated with the degrading hypocrisies of politics. When that abject heathen, Cicero, addressed Julius Cæsar as a god, he was doubtless wishing, in his heart, that his divinity had been upset in his celebrated trip in the rowboat. Hence the most benighted idol worshipper is yet on a higher plane than the sycophant who tells a king that he is a god, because he still really worships the invisible, and, therefore, looks beyond and above man; but he who would name Solomon thus believed no more in God than did the men of his kind in the court of Tiberius or of Caligula. Surely, Solomon in all his glory was never arrayed like one of these by a devout believer in Jehovah!

¹ Perowne ("Book of Psalms," 2d ed. p. 179), in his remarks on verse six, says that it is impossible to suppose that the mystery of the Incarna-

If, however, the writer of this psalm referred consciously to the Messiah by these words, and to him alone, the case becomes altogether different. For we have already seen that the conception of a Coming One necessarily implies a more than human personality when it involved the idea of an everlasting kingdom.¹ The Son of David, who was to sit upon his father's throne, and upon

tion was distinctly revealed under the Old Testament dispensation. Therefore, according to him, the Psalmist here, when he addressed Solomon as a god, meant the Messiah only by being "carried beyond himself." The "impossibility" occurs only in the minds of those who have settled it *how* the Spirit of God moved the prophets.* Now, although we may decline very properly to limit or to define inspiration, we are under no difficulty in estimating our fellow-men, and hence can say that the man who could sing of Solomon as a god must be left with, and in no historical or scientific sense "be carried beyond," an atheistic heathen. There need be no confusion of ideas in such a judgment, for the question now is, not whether the Spirit of God speaks *also* in this psalm, but what manner of man he was who could speak so of Solomon. History abounds with quite enough "ready" writers of the kind to enable us to rate such a poet's conception of the true God at exactly its proper value. This subject is serious, because it shows how the exigencies of a preconceived theory seem to disable some Christian writers from perceiving how they drag down the teaching of all Scripture about God, and afford such aid and comfort to naturalistic theology, by transforming the authors of these three psalms into the like of degenerate Greeks. All that naturalism contends for, namely, that *all* religions are born of human thought, is granted when these three psalms are referred primarily to ancient Hebrew kings. The religion of the Old Testament is then shown to have had, like every other, its stage of purely human conception, and a low one at that. Surely the fact that all intimations of a divine human personality in the Old Testament occur only in passages of Messianic import, and that the name of no historic king is ever linked with Deity, ought to weigh against the dogma that a psalmist must always have had some contemporary prince in view when he spoke thus, before he could look higher. For it is much easier to prove that he who could see a god in an earthly monarch *could not look higher*, than that, somehow, he was "carried beyond himself" into uttering the counsels of God. In fact, this theory leaves us none but Balaams for our prophets, for in his case it was true enough that he was carried beyond himself.

¹ Dan. vii. 14.

* 2 Pet. i. 21.

his kingdom, to order it and to establish it from henceforth even forever, must be in some sense himself Eternal and Mighty God.¹ As priest forever, also, he might well be called the Lord,² as no other person is ever called, and the Only-begotten Son.³ These, and other expressions of like import, show that the idea of the coming king was throughout clear and consistent in recognizing a very different nature in the Messiah from a Solomon, or from any earthly prince who must in due time be gathered unto his fathers and leave his kingdom to others. Therefore, without necessarily implying that the whole doctrine of the incarnation, as it is found in the New Testament, was present to the minds of the prophets when they spoke of the Messiah, yet if the conception of an abiding king entered their thought at all, we can see that they would have to think of him as a superhuman person, and thus related to God as no other son of man could be. His exaltation, therefore, could be expressed in divine terms without sacrilege, for to the prophet's eye he was not a still non-existent being, like those of unborn generations, but rather one whose goings forth are of old, even from everlasting.^{4 5}

¹ Isa. ix. 7.² Ps. cx. 5.³ Ps. ii. 7.⁴ Mic. v. 2.

⁵ The fact that the term *Elohim*, gods or God, is applied to judges in Psalms lxxxii. 6, 7, and in Exodus xxi. 6, where the English Version has "judges," cannot be taken as evidence that the ancient Hebrews once thought nothing of addressing men as such. The total absence of anything else of the kind, except in these two passages, and also the absence of any equivalent terms applied to rulers, champions, or kings, such as "demigod," "divine," or "godlike," of which heathen languages are so full, show conclusively that this term had technical and exclusive relation to the judicial office. The judge might be regarded, on account of the high moral, and, so to speak, impersonal nature of his functions, as the vicegerent or visible representative of God, but in the case of a king, his human individuality is too pronounced to make such a term, when applied to him, mean anything else than an incarnation, rather than an image or reflection, of Deity.

As in the other psalms, the king appears here in power as he goes forth to subdue the world to himself. Only those who can grasp no other idea of a king of the world, except he be one of the commonplaces of history, an Alexander, a Cæsar, or a Genghis Khan, find the terms of this psalm inapplicable to the meek and lowly King of Zion.¹ We are told that it is a belted warrior who appears before us here, whose right hand is to become practised in terrible things. But it should be noted that he is to ride victorious, because he goes forth, not to acquire territory for himself, but in behalf of truth, of meekness and of righteousness. Of what other conqueror than Jesus can this be said? When were truth or meekness or righteousness associated with Alexander, Cæsar, or Napoleon? It is true that the world is learning at last that every kingdom which is based upon the insolent triumphs of force must perish, and that no sceptre can endure except it be according to that described by this Psalmist. But this great lesson it has learned from the sole enduring sway of him who is the world's Messiah, because of truth, and meekness, and righteousness.

The difficulty, indeed, with many rationalistic minds, whenever they deal with Christ at all, arises from that same literalism which they are so ready to decry in others. The Light of Galilee, the Wonderful, the Counsellor, is no king to them, because he went about preaching righteousness among villagers, with a following only of poor men and poor women. The abiding kingdom which he set up on earth they cannot even yet see, still less understand how he could send his sword among the nations and through the ages. They can think only of the dead kings and the extinct kingdoms of history, and of their like in our day. Therefore the winning, gracious, righteous, and

¹ Zech. ix. 9.

mighty One of this psalm they can only discern as some, to them real, king of ancient Jerusalem, accepting blasphemous adulation because of the unprecedented honor of becoming Pharaoh's son-in-law! To such minds the undying Jewish people, the undying Christian Church, even the continued life of the papacy; the abiding nature, in short, of everything which has to do with Jesus Christ, whether as preceding or as following him, when nothing else abides, remain wholly inexplicable phenomena. But is there no significance in the actual fact that millions now of many peoples and tongues daily address Jesus in the same words which are addressed to the Lord's Christ in this psalm, "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever!"

The same literalism disables such minds also from understanding the language concerning the King's bride. Here the divergence becomes complete between those who, both in the ancient and in the modern Church, believed they were given an inspired hymn in this ode, and those who regard it only as the production of a poet-laureate. Some misty halo may still enwrap the figure of a Davidic king, and thus enlarge the shadow into Messianic proportions, but the heathen princess from Egypt, with her train of concubines, are quite enough to put an end to all sacred associations, not only in her own case, but in her husband's. The many marriages of Solomon with pagan women, indeed, were a bitter memory to the whole Jewish Church, so that sacred writers do not shrink from representing his once glorious sun as setting in thick darkness on this very account. Is it credible, therefore, that this amazing apotheosis of him in the very act of committing what was a grief of mind to every true Israelite, ever would have been listened to with patience by the godly portion of the nation, much less classed with its holiest treasures?

On the other hand, it is strange how some moderns seem incapable of understanding the voice of Oriental poetry at all. The imagery which meets us in every book of the prophets, we might almost say in every utterance of sacred song, on the relation of Zion-Jerusalem to her Lord, fully justifies the universal Jewish interpretation who the Messiah's bride of this psalm is. There is, in fact, no metaphor so often used as that of the married state of Israel. "For thy Maker is thine husband. The Lord of hosts is his name;"¹ "As the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee,"² and a multitude of other like expressions are to be found, indicating the tenderness of the love of God towards his Chosen, quite as much as the peculiar sin of departing from him. Hence, as Zion was ever looking for her King, the celebration of his long-expected advent most naturally occurs under the aspect of a bridal procession towards the glad reunion at the great feast of the Lord.

Historically speaking, no passage of the Old Testament made such a deep impression as this psalm on the founders of the Christian Church. Besides the varied parables of our Lord himself on the marriage feast of the king's son, and the parable of the ten virgins, the writings of the apostles bear witness to a peculiar conception of the relation of the Church to Christ, whose origin must be referred, in the first instance, to the influence of this psalm. We cannot stop to show what immense results in history have depended upon this one idea that the Church is not a community, nor a following of Christ, but rather his body and his bride.³ Even the earthly relation between husband and wife, with its reciprocal duties, is employed not as an illustration of the relation of the Church to her

¹ Isa. liv. 5.

² Isa. lxii. 5.

³ Eph. v. 30-32; Col. i. 18, 24; Rev. xxi. 9, etc.

Lord, but as deriving its own sanction from that heavenly mystery.

With the Christian interpretation, however, of this psalm, much of its imagery about the bride is seen to be truly prophetic. When the Messiah comes, the Church meets him with companions from many lands, but yet is inclined to think too much of her father's house, which she must now forever leave in order that her children may become princes in all the earth. As we read the simply told history of the Apostolic Church when the vast prospect of inheriting the world itself dawned upon her, we can readily understand how she trembled to leave her native home then. History has never known an assembly which had to yield so much as the members of the first council at Jerusalem when they surrendered their Judaism for the sake of their Lord. When we consider what a hold the associations of the Old Zion had, especially upon her truest children, we can estimate in some measure the strain of heart involved in the decision to forget the old house, and to take a new name in company with the nations of the strangers. Without such a trust in her Lord, however, the Church would have remained forever barren, instead of inheriting, as she has already done, so much of the riches of the Gentiles, and particularly the gifts of maritime peoples far richer than Tyre or any of her daughters.

We prefer to rest our argument with these citations, as far as the Book of the Psalms is concerned, for although the mighty personality of the Messiah can be shown to have been more or less clearly discerned in other psalms, yet the connection between type and antetype may be evaded too often by some to render these passages available for our purposes, however helpful they be to the Christian believer. Thus, the Fortieth Psalm bears a close

resemblance to the Twenty-second in the attitude which the speaker assumes both towards God and towards Israel. He says that he has come into the world to do the will of God, and to fulfill that which had been written about himself in the volume of the book, which can only mean the Book of the Law. What that will of God was, he intimates as having relation to the inefficacy of sacrifices, of burnt offerings and sin offerings, to meet the requirements of God. Therefore, he had made known the truth about the righteousness of God to the great congregation, and had there proclaimed, and not concealed, the loving-kindness of the Lord. But, in so doing, he had encountered great persecution by cruel enemies, from whom he prays that God would make haste to deliver him. The reference to the suffering Christ seems to be as unmistakable here as in the Twenty-second Psalm, for of no one else could it be said that he "came" into the world to reveal the righteousness of God, or that he was the subject of Scripture prophecy. But that the speaker is not, in the first instance, the Messiah, is shown by the expression of the sixteenth verse, "For innumerable evils have compassed me about, mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up, they are more than the hairs of my head, therefore, my heart faileth me!" This might well be the utterance of David himself, as he felt estopped by the memory of his own sins from assuming to deliver the message of God to the great congregation, and, therefore, spoke more in thought of the Righteous One to come, who could, in truth, show the full measure of God's righteousness and love.

On the other hand, the Seventy-second Psalm needs only to be read attentively in order to perceive that its author had a greater than Solomon in his thought, though it was composed in view of that king's approaching accession.

He who is to be feared "as long as the sun and moon endure, throughout all generations;" with "abundance of peace as long as the moon endureth;" "Yea, all kings shall fall down before him: all nations shall serve him;" "His name shall endure for ever: his name shall continue as long as the sun: and men shall be blessed in him: all nations shall call him blessed," could only be that true Prince of Peace who should make the throne of David eternal, and of whom Solomon was but an imperfect type. Prophecy, indeed, unlike history, must have many voices, some for every one to hear, whether he will or no; but some also which are distinguished only by those who have the ear for their hidden harmonies.

CHAPTER XII.

THE PROPHETS AFTER THE EXILE.

The Prophecies of Haggai and of Zechariah.

THE writings of the prophets of the restoration from the Captivity possess a peculiar interest, owing to the singularity of their epoch. Nowhere else in history do we find a second beginning to a nation, and least of all in that age which was marked instead by the permanent disappearance of the oldest nations which the world has ever known. Nineveh had passed away but a century before, Babylon was rapidly following, and just at that juncture Egypt was expiring also. With the advent of a Japhetic conqueror in the Persian, the world was beginning anew, and of all the former names Judah alone was to survive, through a new birth, or a resurrection from the ruins of Jerusalem. But who could have expected such a thing, or looked for a dead people to come to life again? Only an exceptional love, as well as faith, could have sustained the spirit of the exiles when they arrived at the site of their fallen city and temple, and enabled them afterwards to work on through years of discouraging poverty, weakness, and opposition.

As with every new life, so this was a day of small things for Zion, particularly as hers sadly differed from all other states of infancy in being conscious of a former time of strength and glory. Memories of the Temple of Solomon caused weeping to be heard amid the rejoicings at the

work of Zerubbabel.¹ Then it was that the word of the Lord came by the mouth of Haggai and of Zechariah, to confirm and strengthen her heart by an insight into her mighty future more positive and definite than ever before. The closing era of prophecy, indeed, reveals the coming of Zion's king so clearly that Zechariah, relatively, is oftener quoted in the New Testament than any other prophet.

The general reader is apt to find Zechariah difficult to understand, from his peculiarities of manner both in thought and expression. His dreamlike symbolism, his shifting visions, his incongruous metaphors, and his affectations of ancient or obsolete phrases, render him often obscure to all except scholars. With them, however, the case is strikingly different, for it is remarkable how commentators, even of the most diverse schools, generally agree in the exposition of his prophecies. As is natural with writers who live in the decline of a literature, Zechariah both imitates and exaggerates the characteristics of more ancient authors. Not only does he see visions, like Ezekiel and Daniel, but the word of the Lord comes also to him, after the manner of Hosea and of Micah. As in Ezekiel and Daniel, the scenes in vision are those of his own time and place. Cavalry being the main arm of the Persians, Zechariah sees the whole earth patrolled by equestrian angels, who report to their commander, the angel of the Lord, as he halts his horse among the myrtles of the valley. But, in like manner, the diction and the imagery of earlier prophets are copied, sometimes so closely that we have the curious spectacle of modern rationalistic writers reversing, in his case, their usual procedure, and maintaining that a great part of the book of Zechariah was written by some one much older than a contemporary of Cyrus.

¹ Ezra iii. 12, 13.

This view, however, is negatived, as we shall see, by the circumstantial and consistent correspondence of each section of the book with its very exceptional time and place. Such a book as his could have been written but once in Jewish history. Only a few years later the historical allusions, either direct, indirect, or metaphorical, would have been wholly different. Meantime its archaic phraseology can be explained very naturally on the familiar principle that the old age of every literature is marked by just such reversions to early forms of thought and illustration as we find in Zechariah, so that this fact, rather than militating against the unity of the book, lends it, instead, no small support.

The circumstances attendant upon the writing of the first passage in Zechariah which we would cite are the same with those which led the prophet Haggai, two months earlier, to indite his prophecy, and hence this should be taken into the same consideration. Sixteen years had elapsed since the first body of exiles, under the leadership of the Davidic prince Zerubbabel, and of Joshua the high-priest, had reached Jerusalem and begun the work of rebuilding the temple. As already described in our remarks upon the prophecy of Daniel, Cyrus himself was soon persuaded by the Samaritan enemy to order the suspension of the work, and after him, spite of several attempts at renewal, no progress had been made, so that the restoration of the House of the Lord seemed to be as far off as ever.¹ The people gradually had settled in the neighborhood of Jerusalem, and betaken themselves to their various vocations, until the original design of rebuilding their ruined shrine had well-nigh died out. Meantime a succession of bad harvests and a general decline of prosperity led Haggai to lift up his reproving

¹ Dan. ix., p. 335.

voice, and show that these were indications of the displeasure of God for their unfaithfulness, and to urge both rulers and people to bestir themselves anew to finish the temple. This they forthwith did, and having obtained the favor of Darius, they labored unremittingly until the topmost stone was raised to its place amidst great rejoicings.

But as the edifice was nearing completion its painful inferiority to its magnificent predecessor pressed upon the hearts of all. Moreover, the majority of the exiles, having been born in Babylonia, had become accustomed to the sight of vast structures—such as the renowned walls of the capital, with its immense public works, probably unsurpassed to this day in size or height—and hence the result of their feeble effort in Jerusalem would appear especially poor and insignificant. But Israel has always been the people of the future. The Temple of Jehovah might seem small then in comparison with the shrines of the idols in Babylon or in Egypt. But, said Haggai: “Thus saith the Lord of hosts; Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; and I will shake all nations, and the Desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts. The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the Lord of hosts. The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the Lord of hosts: and in this place will I give peace, saith the Lord of hosts.”¹

Our English translation gives this passage a more personal Messianic application than the original will allow, causing some to understand it as foretelling the advent to this temple of him who is the Desire of all nations, and who, therefore, would confer a greater glory upon it than the glory of the former temple of Solomon. The un-

¹ Hag. ii. 6-9.

doubted sense of the words, however, is that God was about to move deeply the whole world, preparatory to a new order of things, when all nations should turn unto him, and come to his worship with their desirable, or most precious, things ; their offerings of silver and of gold, which are ever the Lord's. Then would the latter glory of this house surpass its former insignificance, for at its shrine would God give the nations, the Gentiles, peace.

It is easy to perceive here, as we will note repeatedly in Zechariah also, the influence of the great prophecy of Micah, so natural to occur to the mind of a returned exile. Micah had prophesied that Zion should be ploughed as a field, and Jerusalem become heaps, and the temple mountain like deserted wooded heights ; then to change, in the last days, into the resort of many nations, who would come together there to be taught the law of God, and to learn of him the ways of peace. Israel, therefore, could not die, as nations and empires might, for though nothing appeared on the horizon to presage the extension of Jehovah's worship from ruined Jerusalem, yet a great shaking of the peoples was about to occur, and Zion's glorious place in history would then appear.

In the first chapter of Zechariah the prophet has a vision of a band of angels, under the command of the angel of the Lord, who, after patrolling the earth, report to him that they find all the nations in repose and comfort, instead of being shaken, as Haggai twice had prophesied. This state of ease contrasted so greatly with the affliction of Zion, that the angel of the Lord, as her guardian, appeals to God to know how long Jerusalem and the cities of Judah are to lie under his indignation. God answers words of comfort for Zion, that his was but a passing indignation against her, while he was, indeed, displeased with the heathen who were at ease, but who had so eagerly

assisted in the chastening of his people.¹ Now he was about to return to build his temple, and to send prosperity to the cities of Judah and to his chosen Jerusalem. Then, under the symbols of the horns of wild beasts which had scattered Israel to the four winds,² and of a smith—not carpenter, as in the English Version—raised up for each horn to fray it, and to render it harmless, the prophet foretells the successive punishment of each of the world powers that had persecuted God's people.

The next vision, described in the second chapter, illustrates the coming enlargement of Jerusalem. A man is first seen attempting to measure the size of the city, but is told to desist from such an undertaking, for Jerusalem was to spread out on all sides, so far from the limits of walls that she would appear to cover the face of the country with her suburbs. Meantime the call goes forth for those exiles who still remained in Babylon to flee from that evil city and land—always designated in prophecy as the land of the north—for God was about to raise his hand in judgment over all the enemies of Zion, who, in touching her, touched the apple of his eye.³ The prophet then goes on to say, in most beautiful language :

“Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion : for, lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the Lord. And many nations shall be joined to the Lord in that day, and shall be my people : and I will dwell in the midst of thee, and thou shalt know that the Lord of hosts hath sent me unto thee. And the Lord shall inherit Judah his portion in the holy land, and shall choose Jerusalem again. Be silent, O all flesh, before the Lord : for he is raised up out of his holy habitation !”⁴

We meet here again with the great distinction of Hebrew prophecy. Zion is to rejoice not only because her oppressors are to be judged and she delivered, but because

¹ Comp. Isa. xl. 1, 2.

² Zech. i. 18–21. Compare the four beasts of Daniel vii.

³ Zech. ii. 6–9.

⁴ Zech. ii. 10–13.

multitudes of the Gentiles are to be joined to her God in that glad day, and to become his people, just as the Jews were. This is the extension of Jerusalem beheld in the vision, and which no man would be able to limit or bound. But to human vision the Jews were not yet a people or nation. Except to a prophet's eye, there appeared only a few pitiable refugees collected amid ruins, more depressing to see than if encamped in a wilderness. Where were the many nations to come from who would seek fellowship with such an humbled race? These were, indeed, the days of mighty faith, such as that which shines through those memorable words which were afterwards chosen by our Lord himself for the abiding encouragement of his Church. "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts. Who art thou, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain."¹

It cannot have escaped the reader that the speaker who addresses Zion on this occasion is called the Lord, and yet is also sent by the Lord; for the passage reads, "Lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the Lord, and many nations shall be joined to the Lord in that day and shall be my people: and I will dwell in the midst of thee, and thou shalt know that the Lord of hosts hath sent me unto thee." This, therefore, is the language of the angel of the Lord, who is so often identified with God in the Old Testament, and yet, as his title implies, is also the One sent of God. Therefore, as a prophecy of the incarnation, this passage expresses more Christian doctrine than pages of polemical demonstration could afford. God came in Christ to dwell among men. Unto Christ have the nations joined themselves, and in so doing have become the covenant people of Jehovah. By this great miracle of history Jesus, indeed, shows that the

¹ Zech. iv. 6, 7.

Lord of hosts hath sent him. Well might the world be hushed and still at the august hour of the revelation of God coming in might to shake the heavens and the earth ere he set up the eternal kingdom of his Son!

The Prophecies of the Third and Sixth Chapters of Zechariah.

In his fourth vision, recorded in the third chapter, the prophet sees Joshua, the high-priest, ministering as the people's representative before the angel of the Lord. The unseen realities of the spirit world are before the prophet as he beholds the adversary protesting against the acceptance of such an offering by God, when priest and people were steeped in the iniquity which was typified by the filthiness of the high-priest's garments. Jehovah answers Satan, Jehovah rebuke thee, O Satan, even Jehovah that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee, is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?¹ The significance of this vision lies in the fact that both the Old Testament and the New represent a great cause as on trial in the court of the Ruler of the universe, in which the righteousness of God, in pardoning the transgressor, man, is to be established.²

¹ Zech. iii. 2.

² Hence Satan, or, as the name should be rendered, the Adversary, or the Accuser, is not represented in the imagery of the Bible as in hell, but as in heaven, with an official right to be there as the accuser of the righteous, or the followers of Christ, on earth. Compare Job i. 6: "Now, there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them." Also Revelation xii. 10, New Revision, where the (future) casting-out of Satan from heaven is celebrated thus: "And I heard a great voice in heaven, saying, Now is come the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accuseth them before our God day and night." See also Ephesians vi. 12: "For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against . . . the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places."

Here the adversary claims that the remnant of a sinful people, the last fagot of the pile which had been consumed in the just judgment of God, must be allowed to go the way of the rest ere God's law could be fully vindicated. The gracious answer is that God, in his compassion, chose to save Jerusalem as a brand snatched from the burning, and that he would himself do away with the sin of the people. In token of this he commands that the high-priest be arrayed in spotless robes, and then tells him how the purification and salvation from destruction is to be accomplished, in these words:

“Hear now, Joshua the high-priest, thou and thy companions which sit before thee, verily they are men of portent—for lo! I am bringing forth my servant Branch. For lo! the stone which I have placed before Joshua, upon one stone are seven eyes; lo! I am gravings its graving, and I will remove the iniquity of this land in one day.”¹

This remarkable passage shows distinctly that the great result of justification and of salvation from destruction was to be brought about by the advent of the Messiah. In this, it is worthy of remark, all interpreters, Jews, rationalists, and Christians, are agreed, for it is impossible to understand the assurance solemnly given or protested to Joshua that the iniquity of the land should be removed in one day, unless it should be through the agency of the Lord's servant, Branch, to whom attention is exclusively directed. Moreover, this passage shows that the high-priest appeared arraigned in the heavenly court, not so much for his own sins, as for the iniquity of the land for which he was the appointed intercessor before God.

With reference to the titles of the Messiah, it should be remembered that as Zechariah came after the utterance

¹ This rendering is taken from Wright's “Zechariah and his Prophecies, Considered in Relation to Modern Criticism,” p. 70. This scholarly and masterly book is the best which an English reader can consult on this subject.

of so many Messianic predictions by the former prophets, and which, by his time, had become the common treasure of the people, so we find him associating together the distinctive appellations and allusions of many various writers. Thus, his name for the Messiah, Branch, conveys a well-timed allusion to Isaiah iv. 2: "In that day shall the Branch of the Lord be beautiful and glorious . . . for them that are escaped of Israel." Also Isaiah xi. 1: "And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots." Jeremiah, moreover, adopted this same term from Isaiah, in his words, "The Lord will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, The Lord our Righteousness;"¹ also, in another chapter the same prophet says, "In those days, and at that time, will I cause the Branch of Righteousness to grow [literally, to branch] unto David."² Moreover, the title "My Servant," as the reader is well aware, is the illustrious name of the Messiah throughout the latter part of Isaiah as far as chapter lv., when having accomplished the work the Lord sent him to do, the title ceases to be applied to him.

On the other hand, the language both of prophecy and of sacred song had given to the structure of the Temple of the Lord a spiritual significance which led to the designation of the Messiah himself as the chief corner-stone of the church of God. Thus, we read in Isaiah, "Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation, a Stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone, a sure foundation;"³ and in the great Paschal Service Psalm we read, "The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner.

¹ Jer. xxiii. 5, 6.² Jer. xxxiii. 15.³ Isa. xxviii. 16.

This is the Lord's doing; it is marvellous in our eyes."¹ The writers of the New Testament, through their Jewish training, had become so familiar with this imagery that we find them repeatedly using it in illustration of the life and work of Christ, and of the relation of his people to him.² Therefore, in this passage of Zechariah we see focussed into one, as it were, the thoughts of different minds and ages concerning the great Consolation of Israel, and hence peculiarly adapted for this time of weakness and depression. As we have remarked before, the English term Branch does not express the meaning which came with such welcome significance to the exiles of that day. In their time the royal cedar of David had been felled to the ground, but by this name they were taught to look for the appearance of a young tree-plant, coming out of the ground from the buried stock of Jesse. Like every life of the kind, he would seem humble and insignificant at first, for often does the brief growth of a weed overshadow and conceal the first growth of an oak.³ But the ages would belong to him, until he should become the mighty tree under which the nations of the world would find glorious rest.⁴ Moreover, as the burden on the exiles' heart was the work of building anew the temple of their God, so are they now bidden to see the living corner-stone of the eternal temple being fashioned for them by God himself, and endowed with the perfect wisdom, symbolized by the seven eyes: the same spirit of counsel and of might which Isaiah had prophesied should rest upon the Branch who should grow out of the roots of Jesse. Again, as Jeremiah had said of the righteous Branch, that his name should be "The Lord our Righteousness," so does Zechariah here say that with

¹ Psalms cxviii. 22, 23.

² 1 Cor. iii. 11; Eph. ii. 20-22; 1 Pet. ii. 4-8. Compare also Matt. xxi. 42.

³ Isa. liii. 2.

⁴ Isa. xi. 10.

the coming of the servant Branch, and with the laying of the corner-stone, God would do away with the sin of the land in one day. It was this iniquity which soiled the robes of the Joshua of the vision, but which the second Joshua was to remove once and forever, as no high-priest was able to do by the repeated sacrifices of the old dispensation.

In the sixth chapter, beginning at the ninth verse, we have another of Zechariah's Messianic prophecies, which is an extension and illustration of the previous one in the vision of the high-priest. The immediate occasion of it was the arrival of a deputation from the Jews still remaining in Babylon, who brought offerings of silver and gold to aid in the building of the temple. This deputation Josiah, the son of Zephaniah, hospitably entertained at his house, so that his "kindliness" is referred to in verse 14, as entitling him to the same reward of memorial in the temple as the deputation itself; but our English version has mistaken the word "kindliness" for a proper name, Hen.¹ Coming from the greatest and richest city in the world to Jerusalem, in her ruin and wretchedness, we can well believe that the depression of the scene had its effect upon the spirits of the deputation. Even many years afterwards, the news which returning pilgrims brought was very trying to the devout Jews who lived in foreign lands. Thus Nehemiah tells us when he asked some friends who came from Jerusalem to him at the king's palace, "concerning the Jews that had escaped, which were left of the captivity, and concerning Jerusalem. And they said unto me, The remnant that are left

¹ The root of this word, with the general meaning of good-will, love, or brotherly kindness, enters into many proper names in Shemitic languages—though significantly absent from the Ishmaelitish Moslem Arabic—as in Hanani, Hannah, Johanan, John, Hannibal, beloved of Baal, etc.

of the captivity there in the province are in great affliction and reproach: the wall of Jerusalem also is broken down, and the gates thereof are burned with fire. And it came to pass, when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept, and mourned certain days and fasted.”¹

Meantime the advent of a prophet, one who came with the word of the Lord, was always a welcome token to the pious portion of the people that God was yet with them. On the other hand, we find the absence of such a sign of divine favor deeply lamented, from the early times of Eli to the times of the Maccabees. When Samuel was a child, during the dark days which presaged the catastrophe of Shiloh, when the tabernacle of Moses was destroyed and the ark captured by the Philistines, we read that “the word of the Lord was precious in those days; there was no open vision.”² So, at the darkest period of the struggle with Antiochus we read, “So there was great affliction in Israel, the like whereof was not since the time that a prophet was not seen among them.”³ Hence, the fact that Jerusalem had two unquestioned prophets in Haggai and Zechariah, was not only an encouragement to the laborers on the ground, but would be also one of the first things which a deputation from abroad would seek to learn for themselves. The striking symbolic act of Zechariah, therefore, on this occasion, so like the prophets of olden time, must have been very impressive both to the strangers and to the people, as he thereby directed their minds to the great pledge of the future, the coming of Him who would afford Israel a sight never seen before—a crowned high-priest.

The prophet was directed to go to the house of Josiah and take of the gold and silver which the deputation had brought and make a crown of them. This readily could

¹ Neh. i. 2-4.

² 1 Sam. iii. 1.

³ 1 Macc. ix. 27.

be done according to the Oriental fashion, still common in our day, of wearing silver and gold coins strung together so as to encircle the head, it may be in several folds. Such chaplets thus acquired the name "crowns," although really single ornaments, and intended for only one person.¹ This crown he was commanded to place publicly on the head of Joshua, the high-priest, with this announcement:

Behold the man, Branch! such is his name; and he shall branch up from his place, and he shall build the Temple of the Lord: even he shall build the Temple of the Lord: and he shall bear the majesty, and shall sit and rule upon his throne: and he shall be priest upon his throne, and the counsel of peace shall be between them both!

That these were words of distant and far-reaching import, beyond the persons and place of the hour, every one knew. For, first, no one could think that Joshua himself could be the person meant, because no Hebrew high-priest ever wore a crown, or sat upon a throne. Moreover, prophecy had long chosen the term Branch as the special designation of the Son of David, and hence he could not come of the family stock of the high-priests. The expression that "he shall grow up out of his place" would be understood by all as a reference to his well-known origin from the root of Jesse in its native Bethlehem.² The Branch here is further shown to assume royal dignity, because he shall bear the "glory" or the majesty, which, as a term, is almost universally chosen in the Old Testament to denote either the Divine Majesty, or the majesty of a great king, closely typifying the Divine Majesty. But the reason why Joshua is crowned, rather than Zerubbabel, who was a Davidic prince, is made apparent by the stress laid upon the fact that the Messiah should be also a priest upon his throne, according to a special ap-

¹ Compare Job xxxi. 36; Rev. xix. 12.

² Compare Exod. x. 23.

pointment or agreement with God. Thus it was that Joshua, most unexpectedly to himself, but most impressively to all the people, was made to stand as his type—a priest wearing the emblems of a king.

Another fact particularly emphasized about the priest-king is that he should build the Temple of the Lord. That this could not be the earthly temple, then in course of restoration in Jerusalem, every one of the prophets' hearers also knew; for both the building and the completion of that already had been expressly promised as the reward of Zerubbabel, not only by Haggai, but also by Zechariah himself, in these words: "The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house; his hands also shall finish it."¹ The Temple which the Messiah was to raise in the world could be no other than the Israel or living Church of God, in which the Lord should dwell among men, and of which the earthly house was but the type or symbol. The prophet had already foretold the accession, in Messiah's day, of many nations to mother Jerusalem, and so now it is promised that this deputation was but the precursor of many who would come from far to aid in the upbuilding of the Temple of Christ and of God.²

While this prophecy, therefore, alludes to the promises of Micah and of Isaiah concerning the conversion of the Gentiles, yet its most striking reference plainly is to the great oracle of the Hundred and Tenth Psalm. It is there that we see the great figure of the eternal Priest-King, and read those words of "counsel" and agreement between Jehovah and him as he takes his appointed throne at the right hand of the Majesty on high. However difficult of comprehension that psalm might have been to the people whom Zechariah addressed, yet they knew that it foretold the advent of a victorious king and priest for the whole

¹ Zech. iv. 9.

² Zech. vi. 14.

world. With this inspiring reminder they could turn again with new life to the work of restoration, again assured of the great future that lay before them.

The Prophecy of the Eighth Chapter of Zechariah.

The seventh and eighth chapters of Zechariah contain an address which illustrates very well the consolatory and encouraging nature of his prophecies to his struggling countrymen, and which ends with another of his characteristic Messianic predictions. Its special occasion was the sending of a deputation from the people to ask of the priests and prophets at the Temple whether they should continue the observance of the great fast in the fifth month of the Hebrew year, in commemoration of the destruction of the city and Temple by Nebuchadnezzar. It seems that along with this fast they were accustomed to observe three other fasts, one in the fourth month, one in the seventh, and one in the tenth, all on account of various events in the former siege and destruction of Jerusalem, but now that the Temple was rebuilt, and the promise of full restoration to the land renewed, the people naturally inquired whether it was not allowable to discontinue these mournful anniversaries.

The first part of the answer which the prophet was directed to give was to the effect that neither fasting nor feasting is shared by God, but that these things have relation only to men, and hence are acceptable or not, according to the spirit of those who take part in them.¹ Rather than occupy themselves with such questions, the prophet goes on to show what it was which their fathers, in the days of their former prosperity, did not observe, and, therefore, brought upon themselves the desolation of the land. The word which God sent to them by the for-

¹ Zech. vii. 4-6.

mer prophets was that they should "execute true judgment, and show mercy and compassions every man to his brother; and oppress not the widow, nor the fatherless, the stranger, nor the poor; and let none of you imagine evil against his brother in your heart."¹ But they refused to hearken, with an obduracy of heart which caused God's judgment to scatter them as by a whirlwind among the nations, and leave their land an abandoned desert.

Now, however, God was jealous over Zion, and was returned to dwell in Jerusalem, and make her what she was in name, the city of righteousness, and his Temple the Holy Mountain so gloriously spoken of by his former prophets.² To the newly returned exiles the gracious assurance is given that Jerusalem's desolate streets would yet be thronged with people, from old men and women, tottering from very age, to boys and girls, playing in the marketplace. Why should such a thing seem marvellous to the handful who had come back from Babylon? Is anything marvellous for the Lord? Instead he shall bring his chosen from the east and from the west, and then shall he renew his covenant with them. Therefore, let every heart be cheered at this message from the Lord, and every hand be strong in the work of completing the temple; for when they slackened in this work everything went wrong with them, but when they applied their hearts to it, God would be with them to prosper them; until, instead of being accounted a curse among the nations, they would be honored as a blessing.³ All this good should come to them provided they kept, not fasts, but the same message sent of old to the nation: "Speak ye every man the truth to his neighbour; execute the judgment of truth and peace in your gates: and let none of you imagine evil in your hearts against his neighbour; and love no false oath: for

¹ Zech. vii. 7-14.

² Zech. viii. 1-6.

³ Zech. viii. 9-17.

all these are things that I hate, saith the Lord.”¹ If they would observe these commandments, then each of the fasts which the people inquired about should be turned into feasts, to be observed with all joy and gladness.²

A beautiful picture is then given of the last days which Micah and Isaiah beheld in their vision, and which is reproduced by Zechariah in these glowing words:

“Thus saith the Lord of hosts: It shall yet come to pass, that there shall come people, and the inhabitants of many cities: and the inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, Let us go speedily to pray before the Lord, and to seek the Lord of hosts: I will go also! Yea, many people and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the Lord. Thus saith the Lord of hosts; In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold, out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you.”³

The great oracle of Micah, which Isaiah quoted, should be read in connection with this passage, which refers to it, because there can be no stronger testimony to the reality and to the power of faith.⁴ Some minds find it difficult to account for the unique place assigned to faith in the Christian system of religion. This is mainly because it is confounded by them with credulity, instead of recognizing it as that deep trust in God which is the most vivifying principle of humanity in every upward way. Micah, at his distant day, when Rome was founded, to succeed in the course of centuries Nineveh and Babylon as a world-waster and oppressor of Israel, yet looked beyond to a spectacle of many nations coming, like processions of Israelites, up to the mountain of the Lord. That such a thought of faith could have been conceived in Jerusalem then, shows that there was something supernatural there. But Zechariah, and the believers in his prophecy, had to

¹ Zech. viii. 16, 17.

² Zech. viii. 18, 19.

³ Zech. viii. 20-23.

⁴ Micah iii. 9; iv. 1-4.

live by faith even more than did their forefathers in the days of Hezekiah. The throne of David had been cast down to the ground, his glory had ceased, and his crown been profaned!¹ The Temple of Solomon was overturned, Jerusalem had become heaps, the nation dispersed, and its name blotted out from the record of the world. As the exiles labored to erect a modest shrine on the site of the ancient glory of Israel, they met with the taunts and sneers of the Edomite, the Syrian, the Philistine, and the Samaritan. "What do these feeble Jews? will they fortify themselves? will they sacrifice? will they revive the stones out of the heaps of the rubbish which are burned? Now Tobiah the Ammonite was by him, and he said, That which they build, if a fox go up, he shall even break down their stone wall."²

With all this weakness and solitariness of Zion before him, Zechariah repeats the assurance that many peoples and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem. The expression, that the inhabitants of one city shall go to another, is also parallel to this old statement from Micah, and even more indicative of the disappearance of rivalry from the world; for in Zechariah's time cities were in name, like Nineveh and Babylon, synonymous with countries or empires, just as the thought of Rome afterwards dominated the conception of New Testament writers, so as to lead one to speak of Abraham and the patriarchs seeking a better country, wherefore God hath prepared for them a city.³ Instead of the deadly sentiment of Rome towards Carthage, the embassies should be sent to say, "Let us go speedily to pray before the Lord;" with the ready answer, "I will go also."

But let no one in our day say that this is the dream of an enthusiast, which somehow has been fulfilled to such

¹ Ps. lxxxix. 39, 44.

² Neh. iv. 2, 3.

³ Heb. xi. 10-16.

an extent by the spread of the worship of the God of Jerusalem, through the preaching of Christianity, as to appear a real prophecy. There is something in these words which no man, even a modern, would naturally utter, and, least of all, a patriotic enthusiast. For an ardent Jew—the Talmud abounds with such spirits—describing some fancy scene of national exaltation, would certainly have had it at the expense of the enemy. Here, on the contrary, the “nations” crowd about the Jew as suppliants for no favor but one, “We will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you.” It is God alone who is the glory of Judah and of Jerusalem, and as to the stranger, there is no resentment towards him, but the opposite; certainly, there is no word of triumph over him. Jerusalem is to be the capital of the world, but not a Rome. The gathering to the Temple of the Lord, which Messiah is to build, is to be a festive one. As Haggai had said, “in this place will I give peace;” so Zechariah, still using Mical’s words, repeats, “in that day shall ye call every man his neighbor under the vine and under the fig-tree.”¹

If ever literal fulfilment be required of us in our argument, it often can be furnished, as it may be here. Thus, Zechariah’s expression, “ten men out of all languages of the nations,” means a great and indefinite number of men of different languages, because so is the phrase “ten” used in the old Pentateuch idiom, which this prophet likes to employ.² The actual fact is that to find how many languages there are in the world, now, which have written characters, we could not have recourse to translations of any great author among the “nations,” or Gentiles, whether ancient or modern. Asia wants no Western poet or sage. Africa would find such unintelligible. In our

¹ Zech. iii. 10.

² Gen. xxxi. 7; Lev. xxvi. 26; Numb. xiv. 22.

day Shakespeare is read from the Sandwich Islands to the Danube, but cannot be ferried across that river, if the Turk is there. We must go to the rooms of a Bible Society, and nowhere else, to meet with the languages of every family of man, as the Christian Church uses her modern gift of tongues to make known the words of Micah and of Isaiah and of Zechariah to men of every race and clime, from the Greenland Esquimaux to the African negro. What is this but the wonderful fulfilment of the prophecy? because from the Jew alone have the nations of the world heard that Word of God which alone can bring them to unite and rejoice in one brotherhood, and in hearing one message.

The Prophecy of the Ninth Chapter of Zechariah.

We have seen that the restoration of Israel was regarded with no friendly eye by the nations round about, who had been of old the enemies of the people of God. In this chapter the prophet first denounces divine judgments upon them all in turn, beginning with the cities of Syria on the north, Hadrach, Damascus, and Hamath.¹ Then follow the famous names of Sidon and Tyre, while he predicts for the latter proud mistress of the sea an overthrow which would send consternation through the cities of Philistia. This "burden" on the nations, however, closes with a word of mercy, in foretelling that the remnant of the Philistines, those ancient and inveterate foes of Israel, would be converted to God, and become incorporated, like the Jebusites of Jerusalem, among his people.

This note of salvation is the prelude to the great announcement which follows. The fulfilment of these judgments was reserved for the closing day of the Persian Em-

¹ Zech. ix. 1-7.

pire. Under the Persians, the hostile neighbors of Israel had all flourished and risen to importance. Gaza was allowed to have her own king, as were Sidon, Tyre, and Arvad, among the Phœnician cities. Tyre especially grew rich and powerful, so as to attract the admiration of Herodotus in his travels, while Jerusalem continued so insignificant that he seems not to have heard either of it or of the Jews. At last came the renowned Macedonian, fresh from his great victory at the Issus. Tyre alone ventured to give him a haughty defiance, which he met by a rapid and fierce siege, and then by an awful massacre. After that he fell upon the plain of Philistia with fire and sword, but at the same time showed an unexpected and singular moderation towards the Jews, in striking fulfilment of the words in this chapter, where Jehovah is represented as standing guard about his sanctuary, "because of the army, because of him that passeth by [to Egypt], and because of him that returneth."¹

At this point a great contrast appears. The world has never seen a second Alexander the Great, in figure or aspect. He claimed to have the blood of the terrible Achilles in his veins; in actual realization he was Achilles, and more. Young, handsome, strong, irresistible, cruel, the best horseman of his age, so that the very name of his fiery steed is proverbial, he has ever impressed men's imaginations as the typical warrior-hero of history. But, of all the world's chieftains, Alexander was characterized by a personal pride and arrogance which rose almost to madness. This it was which impelled him to murder his old and best general, Parmenio, with his scarcely less distinguished son Philotas, whom he had tortured to death in his presence in revenge for the high spirit of both father and son in declining to prostrate themselves before him

¹ Zech. ix. 8.

as a god. We have already referred to his barbarous dragging of the brave king of Gaza to death at his chariot, when he captured that city, and thus cruelly fulfilled the prediction of the prophet in this chapter; nor, to the last, did his career show aught but one continued blood-offering to self-worship.

But Zechariah has another king before him, whose form and aspect he describes in terms which fall upon the ears of the world with startling significance. For such a king the world well knows has come, but would fain deem it impossible that Zechariah could have known him. Though Jews and rationalists are as much agreed as Christians that the prophet means here the Messiah, and none other, yet their perplexity is great to account for such a conception as this, or to understand how Zechariah came to frame such an utterance. For it would seem as if every attribute and circumstance by which he could represent the opposite to the world-hero, the prophet makes descriptive of the coming king of Zion, as he exclaims:

“Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, [yea] upon a colt the foal of an ass. And I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem, and the battle bow shall be cut off: and he shall speak peace unto the heathen: and his dominion shall be from sea even to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth.”¹

This king would be just, which the hero never was in thought or intent, when as a robber he attacked the nations which he had never before seen. This king comes not as a destroyer, but as a saviour; not in pride of heart, nor worldly state, but lowly, and riding upon an ass, a colt just taken from its mother. The significance of all this the prophet's hearers well knew. The horse ever appears

¹ Zech. ix. 9, 10.

in their Scriptures as the symbol of war. He belongs to the old Egypt, whence the nation had been delivered, and the law forbade a king of Israel copying the state of the Pharaohs with their multitude of horses.¹ On the other hand, from the earliest times down to our own day, the Eastern judge rode upon an ass, as better fitted to the peaceful nature of his office and functions.² With the choice of a foal, also, on which never man had sat, they would understand the sacred character of the king himself, for the law strictly commanded that no animal be devoted to the service of the Lord unless it had never been used in the service of man.³

He comes to Zion also, to become there the king of the world, for his dominion is to extend from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth; but he begins his world-conquest in a way unheard of in any story of the kingdoms, by removing first from his own people every weapon of war, and every arm in battle. "I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem, and the battle bow shall be cut off: and [then] he shall speak peace unto the heathen."

As just remarked, the Jews scarcely knew how to reconcile the humble and unostentatious coming of the king with their natural aspirations for a mighty and conquering Messiah.⁴ Those moderns also whose principle is that

¹ Deut. xvii. 16.

² One of the finest-looking animals in the world, and the hardiest, is the white ass of Bagdad, whose celebrated breed is reserved for judges and men of rank, and whose price is often very great. The use of the white ass by judges is referred to in Deborah's song: "Speak, ye that ride on white asses, ye that sit in judgment" (Judges v. 10).

³ Numb. xix. 2; Deut. xxi. 3; 1 Sam. vi. 7; Mark xi. 2; Luke xix. 30.

⁴ Some of them attempted to get over the difficulty by exalting the dignity of the animal on which the Messiah was to ride. Lightfoot (on the Talmud) relates the raillery of King Sapor, a Persian monarch of later days (B. C. 240), who in his pride thus addressed the Jewish Rabbi Samuel, "Ye say

the prophets created their own ideals, are equally at a loss to account for the prophets. Had Zechariah become so accustomed to an humbled Zion that he must provide a meek and lowly king to match? Would any man naturally idealize in such a fashion? How came the prophet also to conceive of a king who was to gain dominion over the whole circuit of the known world by first depriving his own people of everything which an army needs? Where are we to find a counterpart to this thought of one who is to speak peace to the nations and they shall obey him? Every one knows that to do so we must think of Jesus alone. There is not a word of this marvellous passage which does not apply to him as a person, as a king, and as a conqueror; but could the like of Jesus have occurred to, or been created by, the mind of Zechariah centuries before?

As Hengstenberg well remarks, the triumphal entry of our Saviour into Jerusalem was not intended by him to stand as a literal fulfilment of this prophecy, for in its scope and intent this prophecy would have been fulfilled though the procession of Palm Sunday had never taken place. It was rather "a symbolical action, the object and design of which was to assert his royal dignity, and to set forth in a living picture the true nature of his person and kingdom in opposition to the false notions of both friends

that your Messiah will come upon an ass. I will send him a noble horse." To which speech the Rabbi, with equal pride, rejoined: "You have not a horse of a hundred colors, like his ass." On this rejoinder Lightfoot makes the pithy remark, "in the deepest humility of the Messiah they dream of pride even in his ass." Others attempted to account for this, and similar passages in import, by devising the expedient of supposing that two Messiahs were spoken of in the prophets—the Messiah ben-David, or the great and victorious Messiah, and the Messiah ben-Joseph, or the Messiah who was to suffer, and ultimately to be slain on behalf of his people.—Wright, "Zechariah and his Prophecies," p. 238.

and foes." So far were his followers from entering into the spirit of the prophecy that its existence and terms did not even occur to them, for we read about them then, "These things understood not his disciples at the first: but when Jesus was glorified, then remembered they that these things were written of him, and that they had done these things unto him."¹

He soon showed in Jerusalem how far all men were from understanding him as a king. That indeed he is such, the wonderful and majestic tone of his parting words to his doomed ancient people show. "Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see ME henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."² The undoubted fact is, nevertheless, not generally noted that it was just at this moment, when he turned, with aching heart, from the lost nation, that the scene of John xii. 20 occurred. Those Greeks who desired to see Jesus really stood before him, the long-prophesied successors of unhappy Israel.³ What an hour that was, and how thoroughly the Great Prophet understood it! "And Jesus answered them saying, The hour is come, that the Son of Man should be glorified! . . . Now is my soul troubled: and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour; but for this cause came I to this hour!" This was the great turning-point in the history of the world, as even unbelievers have to admit, when the nations accepted him whom the nation rejected. But turning-points, either with nations or with individuals, nearly always coincide with tragedies. So it was here, and we can well understand how the compassionate heart of the royal speaker was wrung at the long, sad parting with the old, though his new people, greater and mightier far, were coming forward to meet him. When we follow

¹ John xii. 16. ² Matt. xxiii. 38, 39. ³ Isa. xlii. 4; xlix. 1, 5, 6, 12.

him thence to the Mount of Olives and listen to those words to his disciples, spoken as if all Time belonged to him, we must recognize the whole of that otherwise inexplicable portrait of Zechariah; a king indeed, and first of all, but also meek and lowly, just, having salvation, and he who alone speaks the word of peace to the world.¹

At this point we would direct attention to the errors of a narrow literalism in the exposition of the Old Testament prophets, which tends more than anything else to empty them of their profound and precious meaning. Some interpreters deal with these writings as no poetry in any language is ever dealt with, so that they seem incapable of perceiving the import of a figure, the meaning of a metaphor, or even the use of an illustration. Thus when Micah says that in the last days "the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it," some would have us understand that only the literal Mount Moriah is meant, and that the prophet thinks only of Jerusalem becoming the capital of the world. The Holy Mountain also of Isaiah xi. 9, where they shall not hurt or destroy in any part of it, but where the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, is not the redeemed world of man under the Branch from the root of Jesse, but is only a restored and glorified Palestine. So again the mountain of Isaiah xxv., where the Lord of hosts shall make a feast unto all people, and where he shall remove the veil that is spread over all nations, and where he will swallow up death in victory, they explain as only the one Jewish spot of earth where the temple stood. Neither do they see any spiritual meaning in the great scene of Isaiah xlix., where the nations from the north and the west, and

¹ Matt. xxiv.

from the land of Sinim, answer the speaker who has been addressing the Greeks, by coming to him as to their shepherd, because "I will make all my mountains a way, and my highways shall be exalted."

Now, it is just such literalism which causes the total misconception of the real Zion-Jerusalem of the prophets. Instead of the true Israel of God, these interpreters see in the prophetic Zion only the capital of the Jewish state, or else nothing but the personification of the earthly, the outward, and often the wholly apostate, Israel of history, though thus they make the prophets both unintelligible and self-contradictory. We have seen how through the latter part of Isaiah a plain division and opposition appears between the true, humble people of Jehovah, and their persecutors in Israel itself. Such a picture is soon to appear before us in Zechariah also. But, taken in its literal sense, if the Zion-Jerusalem of this ninth chapter was the city and people which witnessed the coming of Jesus on Palm Sunday, then they were the last persons on earth who should rejoice or shout for joy. Instead, when he beheld Jerusalem on that occasion, he wept over it. But the world well knows that as there has come a king who meets the prophet's description, so also there is a Zion, though she be called by another name, to which he has come and which rejoices in him.¹

The Prophecy of the Eleventh Chapter of Zechariah.

The subject of this chapter is the experience of a shepherd who was chosen by God to take charge of a wretched flock, but who is contemptuously rejected by them. While this central idea of the passage is plain enough, and generally agreed to by expositors, yet the details and the imagery are often perplexing, especially as rendered in our

¹ Isa. lxxv. 15.

English version, so that we prefer to quote Wright's translation of this chapter, from his work, to which reference has been made :

1. Open, Lebanon, thy doors,
And let the fire devour thy cedars !
2. Howl, cypress, for the cedar is fallen !
Because the glorious ones are laid waste.
Howl, oaks of Bashan,
For the inaccessible wood goes down.
3. A voice of lamentation of the shepherds !
For laid waste is their splendor.
A voice of the roaring of lions !
For wasted is the pride of Jordan.
4. Thus saith Jehovah my God :
Feed the flock of slaughter,
Whose buyers slay them and do not feel themselves guilty,
And they who sell them, say each,
5. " Blessed be Jehovah, that I am rich !"
And as for their shepherds,
(Each) spares them not.
6. For I will not spare further the inhabitants of the earth, saith the Lord,
And behold I am delivering over mankind,
Each into the hand of his neighbor and into the hand of his king,
And they shall lay waste the earth,
And I will not deliver from their hand.
7. So I fed the flock of slaughter, therefore the most miserable flock.
And I took to me two staves, the one I named Beauty, and the other I
8. named Bands, and I fed the flock. And I cut off the three shepherds
in one month, and my soul was wearied with them [the sheep], and even
9. their soul loathed me. And I said, I will not feed you : that which is
dying, let it die, and that which is perishing, let it perish, and as for the
10. rest, let them eat each one the flesh of its companion. And I took my
staff, Beauty, and cut it asunder, in order to break the covenant, which
11. I had made with all the nations. And it was broken in that day, and
the wretched flock knew accordingly, they who observed me, that it
was the word of Jehovah.
12. And I said to them, If it be good in your eyes, give me my wages,
and if not, forbear. Then they weighed out for my wages thirty pieces
13. of silver. And Jehovah said to me, Fling it to the potter, the glorious
price, at which I was priced by them. So I took the thirty pieces of
14. silver, and I flung it in the house of Jehovah, to the potter. Then I cut

in sunder my second staff, Bands, in order to break the brotherhood between Judah and between Israel.

15. And Jehovah said to me, Take unto thee yet the instrument of a foolish shepherd.
16. For behold I am raising up a shepherd in the land,
The perishing he will not visit, the scattered he will not seek,
The broken he will not heal,
The strong he will not care for,
But the flesh of the fat he will eat,
And he will break in pieces their hoofs.
17. Woe, worthless shepherd, forsaking the flock!
(May) a sword (descend) upon his arm
And upon his right eye!
His arm verily will wither,
And his right eye be verily blinded!

This prophecy begins with a dramatic scene of ruin, sweeping as a consuming fire over the whole land from north to south. Lebanon is called upon to open its doors, or passes, for the invading foe to enter with his torch of destruction. In a land like Palestine, where timber is so scarce and valuable, nothing but the most wanton hand of war could be conceived of as setting fire to the forests. Here the conflagration roars among the stately cedars, and then among the firs, and then sweeps southward to the oaks, the glory of pastoral Bashan, carrying dismay to its shepherds, and then it is caught by, and runs along the thickets which line the Jordan, and thus drives the lions from their hiding-places.¹ Such is the ominous exordium with which this mysterious story begins, of the good and the evil shepherds of a wretched flock.

As in the Messianic prophecy of the fiftieth chapter of Isaiah, a speaker is abruptly introduced at the fourth verse, who says that he was commissioned by God to be the shepherd of a "flock of slaughter." This flock is also called in verse 7 "the most miserable flock"—not the

¹ Compare Jeremiah l. 44.

“poor of the flock,” as in the English Version. That the flock represents here the people of Israel is not disputed, and the phrase “flock of slaughter” expresses their unhappy state in being constantly exposed to slaughter, instead of being tended or fed. Thus Jehovah tells his servant that this flock has been bought and sold from shepherd to shepherd, who slaughtered the sheep without compunction or fear of punishment, as if they, and not Jehovah, were the rightful owners of the flock. The question naturally arises whether by these evil shepherds the Jewish rulers of the people were intended, or whether they were the foreign masters of Israel, like the Babylonians, Persians, Antiochians, Greeks, and Romans. That, in this instance, the foreign despoilers are meant, is to be inferred from the subsequent words of verse 6, where Jehovah says that he will not spare the inhabitants of the earth, just as they had not spared the flock, but would allow civil wars to break out among them, which would work out his judgment upon them.

The shepherd of Jehovah accordingly took upon him the charge of the flock of slaughter, the most wretched flock, and in token of his sacred office and relation to them he provided himself with two staves, which in prophetic symbolism he named Beauty and Bands. The word translated here “Beauty” is of comparatively rare occurrence in the Old Testament, and refers to divine favor or grace. Thus, in Psalms xxvii. 4, we read “to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in his temple,” and in Psalm xc. 17, “let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us,” and in Proverbs iii. 17 “her [Wisdom’s] ways are ways of beauty, or of God’s favor”—English Version, pleasantness. This staff, therefore, was the symbol of the divine favor towards the flock in the office of his shepherd. The other staff’s name is more obscure in

its import; it is literally "Binders," and from the language of verse 14 seems to have been a sign of union between two distinct divisions of the flock, named Judah and Israel.

Having so equipped himself for his office, the shepherd of Jehovah tended the flock; for how long a time is not specified. As a token, also, of his divinely delegated power, he says that he himself cut off three shepherds over the flock in one month; the presumption, of course, being that they were evil shepherds, similar to those whom Jehovah himself speaks of punishing in the previous sentence.

A remarkable declaration then follows, that at last the shepherd becomes wearied out, not with his duties as such, but with the sheep themselves, and that they in turn loathed him. At this point the metaphor almost ceases, and its personal application is no longer concealed; as the shepherd, in utter disgust at their conduct towards him, throws up his charge, and protests that he will protect and defend them no longer, but leave them both to outward perils and to consume each other with their own contentions. Thereupon he breaks the staff of divine favor, and annuls the compact which he had made with the nations of the world that they should not harm Israel. This imagery Zechariah imitates from earlier prophets, as where Hosea says that God would make a covenant for Israel "with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven, and with the creeping things of the ground"—*i. e.*, that they do his people no injury.¹ The most wretched flock, therefore, soon had reason to observe that in thus wearying their shepherd they had lost the favor of God.

Before making a final separation between himself and the flock, however, the shepherd gave them another op-

¹ Hosea ii. 18.

portunity to manifest their sentiment towards him, by asking what wages he might expect of them, for his watch over them, to take to his master Jehovah, whose servant he was. With studied derision they weighed out to him thirty pieces of silver, the compensation which the law directed to be paid to the owner of a foreign slave who had been accidentally gored to death by an ox.¹ The offer of such a price for one sent by the Lord was so insulting that Jehovah is represented as taking the insult to himself, and telling the shepherd to "fling it to the potter," the glorious price at which I was priced by them! So the shepherd did; he flung it away, but the scene of this termination of all relation with the flock was in the temple itself! Upon this the shepherd broke his second staff, in token of the final separation of the Judah portion of the flock from that of Israel.

Jehovah then directs the shepherd to assume a different character. This symbolic action, with the language that follows it, is in imitation of the expressions of Moses in the Pentateuch. "As the Lord rejoiced over you to do you good, and to multiply you; so the Lord will rejoice over you to destroy you, and to bring you to nought."² As they did not receive the good shepherd whom he sent unto them, but rejected him with scorn, God would send a cruel and rapacious shepherd instead, who would consume the flock. As if, however, a feeling of compassion still lingered with him who had been sent first to save them, the chapter closes with a curse and a destruction denounced upon this cruel shepherd for his treatment of this most wretched flock.

In attempting the exposition of this celebrated prophecy we would remark that it constitutes the first in a series of messages of a very different character from the

¹ Exod. xxi. 32.

² Deut. xxviii. 63.

consolatory predictions of the earlier chapters. A new element in the future of Israel appears in the latter part of Zechariah, as we have seen to be the case in the latter part of Isaiah, namely, that of a fatal separation, *after the Captivity*, between the nation and its God. This is made clear by the successive developments of this chapter itself, namely: 1. The selection of a shepherd by Jehovah for his people because of the oppression which they suffered from many evil shepherds. 2. The cutting-off of three such shepherds over his people in a short, but definite, time, either by Jehovah or by his servant. 3. The ungrateful revolt of the flock after this against Jehovah's shepherd, and a mutual repulsion between shepherd and sheep. 4. A derisive act of the flock, showing the deep estrangement of scorn for both the shepherd and for him who sent him; and, lastly, the coming of another, and a worse shepherd than any who had preceded him in judgment upon the unhappy flock, but whose wickedness finally leads to his bloody destruction.

As in other passages of this apparently, but not really, obscure writer, the disagreement between commentators is not as to the meaning of the passage, either in part or in whole, but rather as to the historical characters or parties intended by the prophet under the figures employed. The Christian interpretation, which regards this as a prophecy of the coming of Jesus unto his own, and his own receiving him not, starts with the assumption that Zechariah is the prophet who wrote it. If this be admitted, or even that it was written by some one after the Captivity, though not Zechariah, then it becomes difficult to evade its application to Jesus Christ, for there is no other rejection after the Captivity but his, and then it was indeed on both sides; the people rejecting their divinely sent shepherd, and God rejecting them, even turn-

ing their temple itself into the like of a potter's field. On this account the whole rationalistic school endeavors to prove that the latter part of Zechariah was written by some much earlier prophet than he—some contemporary of Micah or of Hosea, in the days of Ahaz or of Hezekiah. How the Jews came to shift this early prophet down some three centuries, and incorporate his writings with so late an author as Zechariah, no one attempts to explain. There is certainly no parallel to such a transmigration of authors in the history of literature—but of this more anon. According to the Christian view, the good shepherd is no other than he who throughout the Old Testament is the guardian of the people of God, namely, the Angel of the Lord, or, as he is sometimes called, the Angel of the Covenant, and who continued to direct the destinies of Israel from Zechariah's age on, until his manifestation to the world as the Christ, the Son of God. That intervening period was marked by great wars among the nations, and by the overturning of empires; but the shepherd tended the flock, and the nation was preserved throughout and prospered. The cutting-off of three evil shepherds, or foreign oppressors, during this time, may then be naturally referred to the thirty years' war of independence of the Maccabees, against Antiochus Epiphanes, Antiochus Eupator, and Demetrius I., each day of the month being accounted as a year, according to the well-known prophetic system of notation, as it is exemplified in the ninth chapter of Daniel.¹

During all this long period, however, the prophet intimates that the heart of the people was not with their shepherd or with Jehovah, and their conduct finally is such that he withdraws the protection of the favor of God from them. The rapid downfall of Jewish independence,

¹ Wright's "Zechariah and his Prophecies."

and the imposition of the iron yoke of Rome, were evidences of this to those who rightly could observe "the signs of the times."¹ Then follows the last and decisive break, the scornful rejection of the shepherd when he finally comes to the flock, and the transaction in which they rate him at thirty pieces of silver. God accepts the dread defiance, and in the Temple itself, which to that time stood as a witness of his solemn covenant with Israel, he cast to the potter, that is, utterly away, the last sign of interchange between the two parties to that covenant. Upon this occurred the final separation, also, between two ancient divisions in the nation, namely, Judah, which always clung to the shepherd David, and Israel, which always at heart rejected him. It was Israel which sided with Absalom when he strove to strike the king, his father, from the throne; and it was Israel which afterwards broke permanently with David's dynasty to set up the apostate kingdom of Samaria.² The symbol, therefore, here is clear enough. Judah represents the true, humble, and faithful followers of the shepherd in the nation, and from whom is to spring the new Zion, of which Isaiah prophesies so fully, while Israel represents the unhappy portion, which, like their namesakes of old, were cast out to wander over the earth, as the most wretched and forsaken people.

This prophecy of a permanent severance between Judah and Israel, and the mention of Ephraim in chapter ix. with Judah, and of Judah, Ephraim and the house of Joseph in chapter x., constitute the chief argument of those who maintain that the latter part of Zechariah was written by a much earlier prophet, who lived while Ephraim was still a nation, and, therefore, at least one hundred and fifty years before the Captivity. Against this view, however, the evidence seems overwhelming, when due weight is

¹ Matt. xvi. 3.

² 2 Sam. xv. 6, 13; xvii. 4, 26, etc.

given to the total absence in Zechariah of the historic consciousness of Ephraim's political existence, which this theory necessitates, and Ephraim's uniform appearance instead in the aspect of poetic personification. *De mortuis nil nisi bonum* is a principle which acts on national, as well as on individual, memories. It is impossible for an Englishman now to burn with wrath against Spain, as his forefathers did in the times of Queen Elizabeth, and so the author of Zechariah presents the same contrast in every sentence about Ephraim compared with the expressions of Ephraim's actual contemporaries, like Micah, Isaiah, Amos, and Hosea. Thus, Amos speaks of the men of Ephraim as those "who drink the wine of the condemned in the house of their god," "who know not to do right." "As a shepherd taketh out of the mouth of the lion two legs, or a piece of an ear, so shall the children of Israel be taken out that dwell in Samaria." "Ye kine of Bashan, that are in the mountain of Samaria, which oppress the poor, which crush the needy." "He will take you away with hooks and your posterity with fish-hooks." "Come to Bethel and transgress, at Gilgal multiply transgressions." "I hate, I despise your feast days, and I will not smell your solemn assemblies." "Ye have borne the tabernacle of your Moloch, the star of your god which ye made to yourselves." "Ye have turned judgment into gall, and the fruit of righteousness into hemlock." Hosea is equally explicit. "Ye children of Israel, the Lord hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, because there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land. By swearing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery, they break out, and blood toucheth blood." "Ephraim is joined to idols, let him alone." "Ephraim is a cake not turned." "The calf of Samaria shall be broken in pieces, for they have sown the wind

and they shall reap the whirlwind." "All their wickedness is in Gilgal; for there I hated them; for the wickedness of their doings I shall drive them out of mine house." "I will love them no more; all their princes are revolvers." "My God will cast them away, and they shall be wanderers among the nations."

So, also, in Micah and Isaiah we find that the prophets who were really contemporary with the erring kingdom Israel, and who were made to feel the evils of its aggressions on Judah, and the frightful demoralization which generations of civil war between the two nations had engendered, speak of Ephraim as a wicked and apostate people, who had forsaken the God of their fathers, and who were more defiant in their irreligion than Judah. Not so Zechariah. With him Israel and Ephraim and the house of Joseph are parts of one nation with Judah and Jerusalem, and equally beloved of God, and not until this fourteenth verse of the eleventh chapter is there any hint of a division between them. Rather he regards Israel as does the great prophet of the Captivity, Ezekiel, who, in times long after the extinction of Ephraim as a nation, nevertheless prophesies that, in the days of the Messiah, Judah, and Ephraim and the house of Joseph shall no more be two nations, nor be divided into two kingdoms any more, but they shall be with Judah one nation, when one king shall be king to them all, even "my servant David shall be their prince forever."¹ We find here no trace of the "burning questions" of Hosea's day; they are all gone and blotted out by the same experience of sorrow which had befallen Judah; nor is the name of Jerusalem's rival, Samaria, once mentioned, either in Ezekiel or in Zechariah, as it is constantly denounced in Micah, Isaiah, Amos, and Hosea, but the names of Eph-

¹ Ezek. xxxvii. 15-25.

rain and Israel evidently occur in ideal aspect and significance alone, as the names Albion and Scotia do in the English of our day, representing, with Judah and Jerusalem, the completed and restored people of the old covenant.

This conception, indeed, of the continuance of all the original twelve tribes in the ideal Israel, never left the Jewish mind, so that it appears in all its completeness in the New Testament, as if woven into the very structure of Jewish speech and mental association. Thus our Lord himself is represented as promising to his apostles that "in the regeneration" they should "sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."¹ Paul, in his oration before Agrippa, speaks of the twelve tribes as instantly serving God day and night.² James addresses his epistle "to the twelve tribes of the Dispersion." In Revelation, twelve thousand out of every tribe of Israel, each tribe mentioned by name, are sealed unto God as his servants.³ These examples from the New Testament might be cited just as cogently to prove that the Hebrew nation continued to exist as twelve tribes throughout the New Testament period, as the use of the names Ephraim and Israel in the latter part of Zechariah prove that Ephraim was still a nation when those chapters were written, for no passage of the New Testament speaks more ideally of Israel than do these passages in Zechariah. Indeed, in the earlier part of the book of Zechariah itself, whose authorship is not disputed, Judah and Israel are spoken of ideally, when, in describing the Messianic age, he says "As ye were a curse among the heathen, O house of Judah, and house of Israel; so will I save you, and ye shall be a blessing."⁴

¹ Matt. xix. 28; Luke xxii. 30.

² Acts xxvi. 7.

³ Rev. vii. 4-8.

⁴ Zech. viii. 13.

Other than this easily explicable reference to Judah and Ephraim, the arguments which have been adduced in support of the double authorship of Zechariah are not worthy of notice. With the ideal significance of the tribal and city names thus afforded us, we can now proceed to the remaining Messianic prophecies in Zechariah, assured that the names are of neither political nor geographical application, but are to be determined in each case by their relation to the central thought or subject of the passage in which they occur. Thus, the rejection of Jehovah's shepherd is the subject of the eleventh chapter. But prophecy had repeatedly identified Jehovah's shepherd with the Son of David, and hence we must look to the relation which Israel, in distinction from Judah, held to David, to understand which of the two here would be most likely to follow the rejected Messiah. Under the guidance of this intimation, we are the better enabled to proceed with the investigation of the central subject of the twelfth chapter, namely, the great mourning.

The Prophecies of the Closing Chapters of Zechariah.

The twelfth chapter begins with the prophetic term "burden," or oracle of judgment, or trial, to come upon Israel, from him who, as Creator of the heavens, the earth, and of the spirit of man, directs and disposes of all things. As the prophecy of the eleventh chapter begins with a vision of destruction and conflagration, thus intimating the calamitous nature of the subject of the prophecy, so the allusion here to Him who is wonderful in counsel, implies that the great things of his Providence towards man, in his dealings with Israel, are the theme of the burden. Moreover, as this reference to God is quoted from the great Messianic prophecy of Isaiah,¹ it further implies

¹ Isa. xlii. 5

that this prophecy relates to Messianic times also, denoted in it by the oft-repeated phrase "that day."

From verse 9 of this chapter to verse 2 of the following chapter it reads thus :

"And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications : and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born. In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon. And the land shall mourn, every family apart ; the family of the house of David apart, and their wives apart ; the family of the house of Nathan apart, and their wives apart ; the family of the house of Levi apart, and their wives apart ; the family of Shimei apart, and their wives apart : all the families that remain, every family apart, and their wives apart. In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness."

"The mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon" is now by very general consent interpreted as the great mourning of the nation for the untimely death of the young and good king Josiah, who fell in the battle of Megiddo against Pharaoh Necho. Thus we read of that occasion : "All Judah and Jerusalem mourned for Josiah. And Jeremiah lamented for Josiah : and all the singing men and singing women spake of Josiah in their lamentations to this day, and made them an ordinance in Israel : and, behold, they are written in the lamentations."¹ Whoever reads the life and writings of Jeremiah can appreciate what a dreadful blow to the fondest aspirations of his heart the death of this remarkable prince must have been. With his fall, all hopes of saving Judah and Jerusalem passed away, and nothing remained but to await the doom of a people that did not deserve to have so good and noble a king. The nation itself seemed to

¹ 2 Chron. xxxv. 23-25.

feel so, and, like the world in all ages, lamented the righteous one when he was forever gone from them.

In like manner does Zechariah represent the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem as mourning for some great and royal personage with a depth of sorrow like that of him who mourns over the lifeless body of his only son and is in bitterness over his first-born. The whole land should take part in it; and hence it is dramatically represented as not only a public mourning, but taken to each home as a family affliction, and thus mourned according to Oriental usage on such occasions. This grief and sorrow of the people, however, is represented as the result of the outpouring of the spirit of grace and of supplications from God upon them first, and hence is of the nature of repentance for some great national sin. What that sin was is mysteriously intimated in the words, "They shall look upon me whom they have pierced."

The use of the first person in these words has caused great perplexity both to rationalistic and to Jewish commentators. If, however, we follow the natural sequence of the prophecies of Zechariah it is plain enough that the reference here is to the rejected shepherd of the eleventh chapter. The sin of the nation in spurning him whom Jehovah had provided for them was very grievous, and is directly assumed by Jehovah as the rejection of himself.¹ So the mourning is now for him whom the nation had pierced, but who also was so identified with Jehovah that this striking oneness with God is repeated of the pierced one, as it was of the rejected one. As it was Jehovah who, through his representative, was priced at thirty pieces of silver, so is it Jehovah who, through his representative, is pierced.

In the case of the earlier Jewish rabbis, their chief re-

¹ Zech. xi. 13.

source in the explanation of this passage was in the figment of two Messiahs, as above mentioned. Wunsche, says Dr. Wright, has pointed out that the teaching of the synagogue with respect to the two Messiahs—Messiah ben-Joseph and Messiah ben-David—was originally derived from this passage, and cites two passages which exhibit this connection. The Jerusalem Gemara—composed between A.D. 230 and 290—notes, in reference to this very text, that there was among the rabbis two opinions. “One says that which they (the people) mourn is the Messiah; and the other, that which they mourn is evil desire (original sin).” In the Babylonian Gemara—composed later, between A.D. 365 and the close of the fifth century—a fuller statement occurs in reply to the question, “What is the cause of this mourning?” In this Rabbi Dosa and the other rabbis differ. The one said that it was for Messiah ben-Joseph, who is to be slain; and the other said it was for evil desire (original sin), which is to be slain. Let there be peace to whoever says that it is for Messiah ben-Joseph, who is to be slain; verily, for it is written, “And they shall look to him whom they have pierced.”

Rabbi Salomo ben-Yishak—a celebrated rabbi of the Middle Ages, better known as Jarchi, and who was born in Troyes, France, about A.D. 1040—also states, in his commentary, that “the (ancient) rabbis explained this passage with reference to Messiah ben-Joseph, whom they shall slay,” and gives it as his own view that “the place cannot be explained otherwise than as referring to King Messiah.” In the Targum Jerushalmi there also occurs the following paraphrase of this text: “I will cause to dwell upon the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem the spirit of prophecy and of true prayer, and consequently Messiah the son of Ephraim (Joseph) will go forth to make war with Gog; and Gog will slay him before the

gate of Jerusalem ; and they will look unto me and pray to me, because the Gentiles have pierced the Messiah the son of Ephraim, and will mourn over him, and will be grieved for him, as they are grieved over the first born.”¹

Following upon this repentance of the nation, “There shall be a fountain opened to it for sin and for uncleanness.” This language implies that the nation had long been unclean in the sight of God on account of its blood-guiltiness in the piercing of him whom they now mourned. The figure itself grows upon the student in beauty as its allusion is understood to a physical peculiarity of Palestine, which is rarely paralleled elsewhere in the world.

We have already adverted to the fact that in the Holy Land the rivers commonly rise from great fountains which break out at the foot of the mountain ranges. Being fed by the melting snows of Lebanon and Hermon, they continue to pour forth their steady and clear streams long after the winter rains have ceased, and while the country wears the parched appearance of a rainless summer. They often come forth also in the midst of dry and rocky surroundings, which give no indication to the approaching traveller of the noble and glad sight which awaits him. It is common, also, for the origin of the fountains to be ascribed to the intercession of some prophet for the people of the neighborhood, who had long suffered from want of water, and hence it readily can be seen how the prophet's hearers could appreciate the promise of an “opening up” of a mighty fountain in the stony valley of the Sanctuary.

The most striking peculiarities of the kind, however, are the intermittent fountains, which are to be found in different parts of the land, and whose periods of running, or of slackening, or of stopping altogether, vary in

¹ Wright's “Zechariah and his Prophecies,” *ut sup.*, pp. 389-391.

each case. One of these, which takes its rise in a cave in a gorge of Hermon, forms no inconsiderable affluent of the Jordan; but it suddenly ceases to flow, usually in September, and its bed remains entirely dry for months, till about the first of May, when it as suddenly rushes forth, with a loud sound, from the mouth of the cavern, a clear and beautiful river, so icy cold that one can scarcely bear his hand in it. If, however, the fall of the winter snows on the great heights above has not been sufficient to fill up the hidden lake to the level which allows of the siphon action to occur that explains the phenomenon of these intermittent fountains, then no waters issue from the cave that year. This may happen for several years in succession, and thus afford a natural basis for the imagery of a fountain long shut up under the rock of the Temple, but which shall burst forth, or be opened, in the last days, after the special outpouring of the spirit from on high. We can readily imagine how an exile like Zechariah, recently returned from the artificially watered plain of Babylon, would be attracted by such a unique feature of the "pleasant land," and use it as a type of that spiritual fountain whose pure sources, deep in the mount of God, were yet to pour forth their living waters, soul-refreshing and inexhaustible, more than enough for the cleansing of the whole world.¹

When such a rationalistic writer as Ewald, though obliged by his principles to deny all conscious reference here to Jesus Christ, yet admits that some remarkable martyr to truth and religion is referred to in this passage, whose death had not met with due recognition, and even suggests that his identity with the great martyr of Isaiah might be inferred, were it not—as he thinks—that these two passages can have no connection with each other, the

¹ Comp. Joel iii. 18; Ezek. xlvii. 1-12.

Christian surely can experience no difficulty in recognizing the Pierced One, who is also one with God.¹ He can also well understand how repentance for him is followed by the opening of the fountain for the cleansing from sin. But the terms of the prophecy itself show that its specific fulfilment is not yet: "that day" is still a future day to us even, for it predicts what has not yet occurred—the repentance and the return of long-estranged Israel to its rejected shepherd and king. The prophecy, indeed, is wonderful, and we have seen what difficulty unbelievers of every kind find in accounting for it; but as it relates to the remote events of the "last days," we ought to recognize the impossibility of the prophet's finding any names to designate the different participants in these momentous events, except by the typical, and only typical, use of the names of his own time and day. In previous chapters Zechariah has shown that we must attach the widest meaning to his sacred names. His Jerusalem is a city which is to spread over the earth, and many nations are to be joined together in her. The temple of the Lord in her is to be built, not by Zerubbabel, but by the man whose name is Branch. He is the king of Zion also who will cut off the chariot from Ephraim and the horse from Jerusalem. Therefore, as remarked above, with the clear understanding that under the names found in these closing prophecies of Zechariah we have the future, and not the past, before us, we can the better discern the general outlines of these remarkable predictions and appreciate their import.²

¹ Isa. liii.

² "Plainly, those Jewish prophets and their first readers could think of Christianity only as of Judaism extended and purified; must conceive of a world converted only as a world coming up to Jerusalem to worship; and must conceive of irreligion, infidelity—every form of hostility to Christ—as the gathering of nations for war against Jerusalem and Judah, to crush them

Thus this prophecy of the twelfth chapter is termed the "burden" of Israel. But if so, who then are the "inhabitants of Jerusalem" and "the house of David" who join in the great mourning for "me whom they have pierced"? Evidently not Jerusalem, the capital of Judah, nor the house of David of Zechariah's time, because both the corresponding names of this chapter are represented as distinct from Judah, and as prevented by God from glorying over Judah—a distinction which would have been unintelligible to the returned exiles of the prophet's own day.¹ Moreover, as it could be no other than the rejected shepherd who is lamented, it is plain that the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem who took part in that rejection, and who now mourn its sin, are identical with the Israel of the first verse of this chapter, and with the Israel whose brotherhood with Judah was severed by the shepherd in the day when he was priced for thirty pieces of silver. To make this still further clear, we have the chief families of the nation, as it was constituted in Zechariah's time—both the elder and younger branches of the royal and the priestly families described as taking part in the mourning—to indicate that, as a nation, they had rejected their shepherd, so now, as a nation, they mourned him.

On the other hand, the Judah upon which the Lord looks with favor in verse 4 is represented as distinct from the mourners in Jerusalem, both in verse 5, where, in the

from the face of the earth. How *should* a Jewish prophet, writing in the midst of Judaism, with no other history of the Church before him, . . . write of the future Church and kingdom of God in the Gospel age? Shall we demand that he write of the Christian Church and of millennial times in New Testament words and phrases, and with fully developed New Testament ideas?"—"The Minor Prophets," with Notes, by Rev. Henry Cowles, p. 356.

¹ Zech. xii. 7.

great conflict with the world, Judah hopes for an alliance with Jerusalem, her princes saying in their heart—literally—“A strength to me are the inhabitants of Jerusalem, through Jehovah of hosts, their God;” and also in verse 7, where it is stated that in this war “the Lord shall save the tents of Judah first, that the glory of the house of David and the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem do not magnify themselves against Judah.” The Judah of this chapter, therefore, can be no other than the Judah which clung to the Davidic shepherd at the hour of his rejection by Israel, or the Christian Church, which began her wonderful and independent career in the world after her separation from Israel. In “that day” she is represented as in a great contest with the ungodly nations of the world, and then turning in heart for help to her old ally, the ancient people of God. We are told, however, that in this war Judah, or the Christian Church, is to be delivered first, and then Jerusalem afterwards, upon the outpouring of the spirit and the great repentance.

This signification of the name Judah in this chapter appears perfectly legitimate when we reflect how truly Jewish in origin the Christian Church is, and how thoroughly she inherits the life of the ancient people of God. The Jehovah of Judah is the God of the Church also, and all the old fathers, all the old promises, and the old Scriptures are hers. Moreover, history has proved that the governors of this Judah, from the apostles down through the illustrious line of her chief men of all ages, have been like a pan of fire among fagots and “like a torch of fire in a sheaf,” overcoming all enemies round about, on the right hand and on the left.¹ That the world is not yet conquered by this Judah is true; and it may be that we have an intimation in this prophecy that greater

¹ Zech. xii. 6.

conflicts are yet to come, when "the siege shall be both against Judah and against Jerusalem," and when the addition to the power of the Church, through the conversion of the ancient covenant people, will prove like the co-operation of the great capital city with the people of the land in repelling an invader.

Zechariah then goes on to say that the change in Israel would be so complete that even the remembrance of idols shall be gone from the land.¹ Israel's apostasy, as every contemporary prophet tells us, was formerly towards heathenism, under the lead of a multitude of false prophets, who deceived the people, and, by prophesying smooth things in the name of Jehovah, finally led them to the worship of false gods. These prophets, like their similars in all antiquity, dressed in shaggy garments, and were accustomed to mutilate themselves, so as to work on the superstitious feelings of the people. So great should be the abhorrence of all such, Zechariah prophesies that these pretenders would be put to death by their own parents. Whoever, therefore, would be charged with being such a prophet would make haste to deny it, and if asked how he came to have such marks or cuts in his hands, would say that they happened to him while he was spending the time with some "boon companions," for such is the meaning of the term translated here "friends."

As if to render the reference of the previous prophecy of the twelfth chapter to the rejected shepherd of the eleventh more unmistakable, the prophet now begins another oracle, with the striking apostrophe, "Awake, O sword, against my Shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts: smite the Shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered: and I will turn mine hand upon the little ones."² Thus does Zechariah see in

¹ Zech. xiii. 2-6.

² Zech. xiii. 7-9.

vision the hope of Israel! for who but he can be Jehovah's shepherd of the flock? Who but he can be Jehovah's "fellow"? It is surely worthy of attention in this argument to note what experiences are prophesied of the Messiah in these chapters. He is scornfully priced at the lowest price ever put on a human being. He is pierced to death, he is smitten down, and yet in each of these experiences he is distinctly affirmed to be one with Jehovah. In this passage his rank is exalted far above that of any mortal mān. The word translated "my fellow" is characteristic of the style of Zechariah, in that it is adopted from the ancient idiom of the Pentateuch, and occurs eleven times in Leviticus, but nowhere else in the Old Testament. In the English Version it is there translated "neighbor," but the context invariably shows that the sense is that of a companion, fellow, or equal, and hence entitled to the same rights or consideration as one's own self. But to be the "fellow" or "neighbor" of God, and yet to be struck down by the sword, at the express call of Jehovah, how inexplicable that must have seemed before the revelation "of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ; in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."¹

The result to the flock would be, of course, its being scattered and left defenceless in this perilous world. This result is at first represented as leading to the death of two thirds of the flock in the land.² The remainder were to be purified in the furnace of affliction, even as gold and silver is tried, until they became fit to be the accepted people of God. How long this trial of the flock of Israel should last we are not told, but there can be no doubt that the fearful judgment upon "Jerusalem and its inhabitants," foretold in the immediately succeed-

¹ Col. ii. 2, 3.

² Zech. i. 8, 9.

ing verses, refers to the time when the flock should be finally scattered.¹ That judgment-time is termed "*a day coming for the Lord*"—not, as in the English Version, "the day of the Lord cometh." This phrase, therefore—"a day"—would seem to imply that it is not "that day," or the time when the Messiah shall reign over the whole world. Hence we can hardly be mistaken in referring it to the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, when at least two thirds of the nation perished, and the residue were sent forth as the outcasts of earth.

As our Saviour himself links this great visitation upon Jerusalem with the more remote event of his second coming, according to a prophetic perspective which shows the one as immediately succeeding the other, so Zechariah here passes on to close his prophecies with a great vision of the last days.¹ In verses 3-5, the Lord himself comes to the rescue of his people and prepares a way of escape for the besieged in Jerusalem, by dividing the Mount of Olives, as of old he divided the Red Sea when the Egyptians pressed sore upon them. The sixth and seventh verses should then be translated thus: "And it shall come to pass in that day," there shall be no light; the shining ones—literally, precious, or lights, *i. e.*, the luminaries of heaven—shall grow small, and it shall be one day—*i. e.*, none like it—known to the Lord only, "not day, nor night: but it shall come to pass that at evening time it shall be light." The imagery here seems derived from the dread clouds of dust which darken the sky in great earthquakes, and which, in this "one day of the Lord," will rise from the scene of his mighty rending of the mountain.³ Towards

¹ Zech. xiv. 1, 2.

² Matt. xxiv. 29, etc.

³ Thus the dense, unearthly darkness which accompanied the memorable earthquake of Lisbon is described as greatly increasing the terror of the catastrophe.

evening, however, this cloud shall pass, and God's people emerge into full and glorious light; whereupon the glad sight will greet their eyes with which the prophets love to describe the blessing of God upon the world in the last days, in that fountain which shall spring from Zion to water the earth and to sweeten even the salt sea.

Thus the prophet Joel, after foretelling the great outpouring of the Spirit in the last day, predicts that "a fountain shall come forth of the house of the Lord and shall water the valley of" the Acacias, or the great valley at the bottom of which lies the Dead Sea, and then extends on southwards to the Red Sea.¹ So also, in the great vision of the forty-seventh chapter of Ezekiel, a small stream is first seen rising under the altar of sacrifice in the sanctuary, and then issuing from the Temple, ever widening and ever deepening, until it becomes a mighty river which changes the whole of the thirsty desert of Judea on the east into the Garden of Eden, and then flows on until it falls at last into the sea of death itself, and heals its bitter waters so that they teem with life. Here Zechariah beholds the living waters that shall go out from Jerusalem; a stream which shall never fail, but be the same in summer as in winter, and enough to heal both the salt seas, that on the east and that on the west. That day is the day in which, as Isaiah said, the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea; for, in the language of Zechariah, "The Lord shall be King over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord, and his name one;" that is, Jehovah shall be recognized everywhere as the only true God.²

In that day, Zechariah prophesies that the whole world should be turned, or changed, into a plain like *the* plain which lies between Geba and Rimmon, south of Jerusalem

¹ Joel iii. 18.

² Zech. xiv. 9.

—not *a* plain, as in the English Version ; while the whole site of Jerusalem should be elevated above the plane of the world, so that she permanently occupy her rightful place, and never again have the curse of ruin rest upon her.¹ This prophecy is an adaptation and extension of Micah's great vision, as, indeed, the rest of this vision of Zechariah may be termed. Micah predicts "that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills ; and people shall flow unto it. And many nations shall come, and say, Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob ; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths."² Zechariah, on the other hand, sees all other mountains and hills sinking down into a plain ; and not only the Temple mountain, but the city of God herself, raised to be the one sacred height of the world.

Then follows the prediction of a great destruction falling from God upon the nations which war against Jerusalem, like that which left the army of Sennacherib a camp of men suddenly struck dead, and which would even fall upon their multitude of horses and camels, leaving a spoil of silver and gold and apparel in great abundance.³ Then shall the survivors from these enemies of Jerusalem become converts to her God, and come up year after year to the feast of the tabernacles.⁴ This being the great joyous feast of the Mosaic ritual, when all men met as equals, and wholly free from every cause of care, is a gracious intimation of the share of the stranger in the best things of Zion. Those who still refused to partake of such a blessing would wither away and perish under a rainless sky ; nor should any escape who thus refused, though, like

¹ Zech. xiv. 10, 11.

³ Zech. xiv. 1-15.

² Micah iv. 1, 2.

⁴ Zech. xiv. 16, 17.

Egypt, they did not depend directly upon the showers of heaven, for on them also would fall the plague which destroys the enemies of God's people.

Finally, in that day the inscription "Holiness unto the Lord," which once was only on the breastplate of the high-priest, set amidst costly precious stones, should be engraved even on the bells which adorned the trappings of the horses on which the pilgrim strangers rode, as well as on the commonest utensils in the city and in the land; and never more shall there be a Canaanite in the house of the Lord.¹ This last expression is very generally explained as a seeker of dishonest gain or lover of money, in connection with the traffic in animals for sacrifice and as money-changers at the Temple. Such characters were termed Canaanites by the Jews after the Captivity, in allusion to the trafficking propensities of the Phœnicians of the cities along the coast, and who are much complained of, some years later than Zechariah, by the great reformer Nehemiah.²

The Messianic Prophecies of Malachi.

With Malachi we have the final utterance of Old Testament prophecy, and it is of much interest to note how plainly it fills up the last detail in the portrait of the coming Lord. This prophet was a contemporary of Nehemiah, and therefore wrote about a century after Zechariah. We have thus in the narrative of Nehemiah an invaluable help towards understanding the message of Malachi, like that which the historical books of the Kings and of the Chronicles afford towards understanding the earlier prophets. A great decline in practical religion had occurred in Jerusalem since the first return from the exile. The priests, especially, had become corrupt, venal, and irreligious, and

¹ Zech. xiv. 20, 21.

² Neh. xiii. 16-20.

even leaders in intermarriages with heathen women, for whom they neglected or divorced their lawful Hebrew wives. They had become greedy of gain, while they cheapened the offerings to the Lord, and profaned the Sabbath. Malachi, therefore, was sent to warn them that God was about to make a great separation between the wicked and the righteous, and that, in the coming of the Messiah the religious leaders of the people would be held to special and dread account.

Thus, God is represented as upbraiding the priests for withholding the honor due to his name and worship by offering, not the finest of the wheat for the shewbread, and not the best of the flock, but only the lame and the sick, which they would not think of offering to the Persian governor of the city if they hoped to secure a personal favor of him.¹ Would God, therefore, accept their persons; they who would not even shut his temple doors or kindle a fire on his altar unless they were paid for it, instead of for the love and honor of the service? Let them not think, however, that God cannot dispense with their service: "For, from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same, my name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering: for my name shall be great among the heathen, said the Lord of hosts."²

In other words, if he be not sufficiently honored in Jerusalem, yet the time is coming when over the whole world the name of Jehovah shall be great among the nations. Then, instead of the one exclusive house of prayer so unworthily ministered to by these grovelling priests, incense shall go up, and a pure, rather than a polluted, offering shall be made to him from every part of the earth.

¹ Mal. i. 6-10.

² Mal. i. 11.

Here again, to the very end, we meet with the same great testimony to the heavenly origin of Scripture prophecy. The glory of Israel is like no other glorying, because, from its first word to the patriarchs, that by them should come a blessing to all the nations and families of the earth, down to this last utterance of its voice, it includes the whole world of men within its gracious promise. Would that Malachi's prediction be speedily fulfilled to the waiting Church of God of our own day! What hinders that fulfilment, after so much has been vouchsafed, except the same spirit of worldliness which the prophet denounces in the Church of his day?

Throughout the second chapter the prophet continues his arraignment of the religious leaders of the people. To the priest had been committed the knowledge which, as the messenger of the Lord, he should impart to him who should seek the law at his mouth. But, by departing from the way of righteousness, they caused many to stumble at the law. By injustice and fraud between man and man, the sense of brotherhood in the covenant had gone from men. Because of their cruel desertion of the wives of their youth, the Lord heard at his altar only weeping and tears and crying out, until he regarded not the offering, nor would accept it from such hands as theirs. Therefore,

“Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts. But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fuller's soap: and he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness.”¹

In this prophecy we have a wholly new element intro-

¹ Mal. iii. 1-3.

duced into the series of the Messianic predictions, and that is, the forerunner of the Messiah, who is to prepare the way for him. The connection of this prediction, also, is such that the people might infer the character in which he would appear, and thus recognize him at his coming. It is evident that he would appear as a great reformer, or as one who should warn the nation and its rulers to set their house in order for the divine coming. In the words, also, of this prophecy which relate to the Messiah, we meet with the same identification of him with Jehovah which characterizes the prophecies of Zechariah. He is the Lord, whom ye seek; the angel or messenger of the covenant; Jehovah, though a messenger: the one for whom the nation was seeking, and anxiously waiting for his manifestation. The prediction that he should come suddenly to his temple, of course implies his special coming, for otherwise Jehovah was always there; but this should be the manifestation for which the ages had been preparing, and yet it would come unexpectedly, as if wholly unannounced. The ominous question, "But who may abide the day of his coming, and who shall stand when he appeareth?" is explained by the description of him as he who will test most thoroughly, even with consuming fire, the teaching and the teachers, the servants and the service, of the Lord's house.

What a solemn fulfilment there was of these words! The world has never seen such a powerful combination of men in error and evil, as at the Temple, when Christ came as its King in disguise. There were the chief priests, scribes, Pharisees, Sadducees, elders, rabbis, all intrenched within strong hedges of tradition and prescription, and all contributing their share towards the ruin of the people. But, as the prophet beholds him here applying his searching tests to the ministers of religion, and,

as his messenger also said of him, "whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire," so, in truth, did his work prove, and the world well knows the result.

In the remainder of this third chapter the prophet draws more and more definitely the line between the unfaithful and the faithful, the self-sufficient sceptic of the world and the humble, single-hearted seekers after God, whom he shall receive as his own "in that day when I make up my jewels." Then shall they be able to discern between the two classes, the righteous and the wicked; between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not. "For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings."¹

Thus, as ever, is righteousness the thought uppermost in every mention of the Coming One. If ever human suggestion about the Messiah could have its occasion, some word according to the natural man, then we should look for it here as the long-repeated promises are about to cease, and the prophecy is to be sealed up forever. But, consistent to the last, it is the spiritual kingdom only that appears, and a King whose day is to be dreaded indeed, but in how different a sense from the day of any other conqueror!

Then comes the very last word. "Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments. Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: and he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and

¹ Mal. iv. 1, 2.

the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.”¹

Whenever a new revelation of God is to be made, those will receive it the best who have been the most faithful in the observance of all that had been revealed before. So the prophet here, in the act of predicting the approach of a momentous epoch, yet counsels the nation to be faithful to the law of Moses, as their best preparation for that great and dreadful day. Thus were found the parents of John the Baptist himself, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord, blameless. But how little does this last note of prophecy sound like a message of hope and consolation! Who is to announce the coming? Elijah! Would that it were any other prophet! What does such a selection mean? Was he not the dread, mysterious seer of old, who smote the prophets of Baal, who called down fire on the men who went to take him, and who shut up the heavens upon the whole land for three years? Does his coming again imply another falling-away of Israel, as in the evil days of Ahab and Jezebel?

Alas, it was even so! Had the Old Testament closed its prophecy with words of peace and of encouragement to the Jews, and pictured in glowing colors the King who was so near, as we find in the apocryphal books written on this very theme but two centuries after Malachi, then we might well doubt its inspiration by him who knows the end from the beginning. Rather, the coming of Christ was a great and dreadful day for the nation, a day from whose dreadfulness it has not recovered yet, any more than Elijah's coming saved the older Israel from her final ruin and dispersion.

In our remarks upon the thirty-fifth chapter of Isaiah

¹ Mal. iv. 4, 5.

we have already alluded to the great share of John the Baptist in the work of setting up the kingdom of Christ. The chief apostles of Jesus himself were prepared for their Master by him. When we adequately appreciate, if that, indeed, be possible, the wonderful obstacles to the acceptance of a spiritual kingdom by that earthly-minded generation, we may be able then to conceive how great was he who caused such a widespread awakening in the land, until all men were set to thinking and asking who of the ancient ones he was. Moreover, as occurs in all true revivals, we may be sure that it was the case in his also, that the deepest effects were felt in the homes that were blessed by it. Parents then long for the turning to God of their children, and the children are then brought nearer than ever to their parents. Had this spirit only permeated the homes of the land enough, the curse had never come, spite of the schools and the parties of the nation, those trees of evil fruit which overshadowed the land, and which had to be hewn down and cast into the fire.

All four lives of Christ unite in showing that our Lord's manifestation to the world, and work in it, was delayed until John was sent to raise his voice in the wilderness. There is nothing so difficult to account for on natural principles as the total silence of the biographies of Jesus during the long years of childhood, youth, and manhood, with the sole exception of the glimpse of the boy of twelve in the Temple. The silence is first broken by the herald voice of John. It is then that Jesus appears first to us, as well as to that generation. Such was the counsel of God; and even we can see something of the divine wisdom of this silence. The lesson of this fact, therefore, to us is to understand how John's call to repentance enabled men to recognize, and to their eternal good accept, the blessed Lord and Saviour whom he announced.

SUMMARY.

HAVING endeavored, in the preceding chapters, to follow the line of Messianic prophecy from its earliest utterance in the Old Testament to its last, we desire, in conclusion, to emphasize anew the argument which may be drawn from its spirit and character. We do not ask, therefore, that note be taken of the special fulfilment of any prediction, as if fulfilment constituted the whole evidence; for that would lower the sacred Word to the level of ancient heathen oracles, which seem to have claimed many such confirmations. A mere series of predictions fulfilled may occasion wonder, but alone cannot carry conviction; for in this case our moral sense calls for something higher than a wonder, however great. That higher source of Messianic prophecy is shown, on the one hand, by its unlikeness to all human opinions and ideals in their weakness, their imperfection, and their transitoriness; and, on the other hand, by its unmistakable conformity to the intent of the Christian Gospel itself. In contrast to the ever-changing phases of history, Messianic prophecy shows no influence of time on its spirit, which remains truly Christian at whatever point we contemplate it throughout its long development. Hence, we would now show how important is the testimony of this close correspondence to the New Testament revelation of the kingdom which is not of this world, and how perfectly it anticipates that which, humanly speaking, could be so little anticipated; namely, the whole message of the Glad Tidings to the nations.

This correspondence, in all completeness, is found in the Covenant with the Patriarchs, that through them should all the nations and families of the earth be blessed. Regarded as a human aspiration, nothing could have been then more out of time and surroundings than this sentiment. Even now the most advanced nations have but little sympathy with distant peoples, if to distance be added difference of civilization, condition, or color. It is this elevation above its own age which suggests the divine origin of the Covenant, for only a divine purpose can be independent of time. Men may vary, or progress, from age to age in their ideals, conceptions, or aspirations; but a design of God must be the same early in history or late, and thus embrace all generations, as well as all races. When the magnetic needle vibrates at the same moment all over the globe, it proves that no earth-born current, but some influence far away in the sun, is the cause. So a thought whose origin cannot be found among the thoughts of its own age, but which is prophetic of distant ages as well—such a thought could come only from heaven.

Hence the strength of the Messianic argument. As it relates to all men, all nations, all families, it refuses to be explained by local causes or peculiarities. It is not Hebrew or Jewish; for the Jew, left to himself, as he has been since the rise of Christianity, has shown no inclination towards the feeling of human kinship. Nor has any other race done better. But Messianic prophecy infused its spirit into the ancient expectant Church in a most supernatural manner, giving voice to sentiments which cannot be ascribed to human inspiration. We need cite only the case of the Psalms in illustration. Though composed in widely separated times, now reflecting the life of a simple agricultural people, and now the crushing, embittering ex-

perience of the Captivity, yet the keynote of their song is wonderfully evangelical. It is when we consider how unlike their times these missionary utterances read that we see how a divine purpose cannot die out, but abides to imbue with the faith of the patriarchs the men who uttered such words as these :

“God be merciful unto us, and bless us ; and cause his face to shine upon us. That thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving health among all nations. Let the people (Gentiles) praise thee, O God ; let all the people praise thee. O let the nations be glad and sing for joy.”¹ “All nations whom thou hast made shall come and worship before thee, O Lord ; and shall glorify thy name.”² “Give unto the Lord, O ye kindreds of the people, give unto the Lord glory and strength. O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness : fear before him, all the earth.”³ “All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord : and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee.”⁴ “Make a joyful noise unto God, all ye lands. All the earth shall worship thee, and shall sing unto thee ; they shall sing to thy name.”⁵

A people which could find the heart to pray thus, when standing alone in the world and constantly subjected to the aggressions of the nations, until at last dragged into exile by them, truly had the elements in it for a heavenly commission to mankind. It was fitting, therefore, that the fulfilment of the message to all nations should begin at Jerusalem.⁶

The Messianic conception, therefore, is impressive because of its world-wide intention from the first. While no peoples entertained a thought of common brotherhood, any more than such a sentiment exists now between the non-Christian Asiatics, the Chinese, and the Hindoos, the worship of the Jehovah of Jerusalem created a desire for the blessing of all strangers. So wonderful is it to find the Gospel idea in the world of the Old Testament times,

¹ Psa. lxxvii. 1-3.

² Psa. lxxxvi. 9.

³ Psa. xcvi. 7, 9.

⁴ Psa. xxii. 27.

⁵ Psa. lxxvi. 1, 4.

⁶ Luke xxiv. 48.

that it would seem as if the people who voiced it so beautifully in song were themselves a prophecy. The portent of the strange survival of that small nation, so indistinguishable in Assyrian days from a crowd of kindred Shemitic tribes, strongly suggests a great divine plan in their destiny. Other nations have lived, only to die and add their remains to the strata of extinct peoples, while the people of the Covenant has continued on, wholly exempt from the general fate of the world. Its Coming One is the only explanation; for the more that ideal of its Scriptures is studied, the more we see how constantly he is associated with the thought of a great good from God for all mankind. The commission of other races was partial, and when their work was done they passed away. But the purpose of Israel cannot be fulfilled until all the nations and families of the earth are blessed.

Therefore, even in the most specialized or personal prophecies, such as that which foretold the abiding destiny of Judah, or that of the eternal duration of the dynasty of David, the ultimate world-embracing cause of the choice is fully given. Judah is to stand, though the other tribes pass away, till Shiloh comes to gather the nations to himself. The Messiah is given as a witness of God to the Gentiles, a leader and a commander to the nations who had neither known nor heard of him, in order that he might establish the everlasting Covenant of God with them, even the sure mercies of David.¹ From the dawn, therefore, of the nation's existence, or through the long succession of its prophets, we continually meet with statements of the share of all other nations in the Messiah, not as conquered subjects, but as participants with Israel in the blessing of his advent. To the prophets the King appears as one with God in extending the knowledge of the

¹ Isa. lv.

true religion among the heathen, and God is one with the Messiah in the extension of his kingdom. In many prophecies, indeed, it is difficult to decide whether it is God or the Messiah who is spoken of, so completely are they identified together, and so far is the ideal purely religious, and different from that of an earthly king or of a political kingdom.

Thus the tree which is to spring from the root of Jesse shall grow to stand as an ensign to attract the Gentiles. Then shall they find his rest glorious, for the earth shall become filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.¹ In the great gathering at the Mount, Jehovah appears as the host who makes there his royal feast for all men, when he shall destroy the face of the covering cast over all people, and the vail that is spread over all nations; when he will swallow up death in victory, and wipe away tears from off all faces.² It is God's elect Servant who is to bring forth judgment to the Gentiles, and on whom the isles shall wait for his law, because he is to be the covenant of the nations and the light of the Gentiles, to open their blind eyes and to lead them out of the darkness of their imprisonment. On which account all ends of the earth are to sing a new song unto God—those that go down to the sea, the inhabitants of the isles of Europe, and the inhabitants of the mountains and plains of Asia.³ Though the Messiah should labor in vain to bring Jacob unto God, yet, though Israel be not gathered, he would prosper in the greater work of being God's salvation unto the end of the earth, as the light of the Gentiles; for to him whom man despiseth, and whom the nation abhorreth, kings shall see and arise, princes also shall worship; because, in the acceptable time of God, in a day of salvation, he had been appointed the World Restorer, the Covenant

¹ Isa. xi.

² Isa. xxv.

³ Isa. xlii.

of the nations, the Deliverer from dark bondage, the Shepherd of God for flocks coming from far, from the north and the west, and from the land of Sinim.¹ The Messiah shall prosper, be exalted and extolled, and be very high. For many nations shall he sprinkle with the purifying blood of sacrifice. The kings shall shut their mouths at him, for that which had not been told them shall they see, and that which they had not heard shall they consider.²

When the dominion shall come to the Tower of the Flock of Zion, the Mount of the Lord shall be the resort of many nations, each inviting the other, there to receive the lessons of God, and to learn war no more.³ Then shall the Gentiles come from the ends of the earth to bow before God and to say, Surely our fathers have inherited lies, vanity, and things wherein there is no profit.⁴ The inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, Let us go speedily to pray before the Lord; and to seek the Lord of hosts: I will go also! yea, many people and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord of hosts, and men out of all languages of the nations shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you.⁵ The lowly, the just, the salvation-bearing King of Zion shall cut off the battle bow, and shall speak peace unto the heathen.⁶ For from the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same, my name shall be great among the Gentiles: and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering: for my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the Lord of hosts.⁷

While this evangelical spirit towards the foreign peoples, so wonderfully prophetic of Christianity (so unlike the

¹ Isa. xlix.² Isa. lii.³ Micah iv.⁴ Jer. xvi.⁵ Zech. viii.⁶ Zech. ix.⁷ Mal. i. 11.

sentiment of the Greek term, barbarians), is similar to no other national idea, ancient or modern, the purely religious character of the Messiah himself is equally unique. He is in no sense a world-hero, and we must ask the candid historical student, why not? If men do not always make their own gods, or divinities, they certainly create their own ideal men, or heroes. The ideal man of any people must embody all that is admired and desired by that people. But how did the Hebrews of the Assyrian and Babylonian periods create a Messiah who is not only utterly unlike a Homeric or Gentile hero, but equally contrary to the desires of the Jews themselves of the time of Christ? According to the prophets, the Messiah would be neither daring, nor spirited, nor formidable, nor victorious in battle. His descent from David revives none of the warlike associations of his ancestor. Instead, he is the Light of despised Galilee, who comes to do away with every sight and sound of war, a real Prince of Peace; and of the increase of his peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, to order it with judgment and justice forever.¹

The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of knowledge and of "the fear of the Lord" (of religion), which shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord (in religion), so that he should not judge according to professions or appearances, but be the righteous vindicator of the poor and the meek of the earth. It is by the "rod of the mouth," and not by the sword, that he will smite the earth. Then the effect of his reign shall be the universal conversion of the fierce, the bloodthirsty, the cruel, and the malignant spirits among men to perfect gentleness and mutual love.²

In contrast to the pride and self-assertion of the conqueror, this king is meek and lowly; ³ one who shall not

¹ Isa. ix.² Isa. xi.³ Zech. ix. 9.

cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench, while to the great world of the Gentiles he comes as their light and salvation to the ends of the earth.¹

Now, after more than eighteen centuries of Christian teaching, men have grown somewhat accustomed to the idea of a spiritual king over a spiritual kingdom, and, hence, do not appreciate how impossible it was for the world to originate the conception itself. But its entire strangeness at first appears so soon as we reflect how Pilate must have received the answer of Jesus to his question, "Art thou a king then?"² A king without the least semblance of power, and who could not prevent a blow on the cheek, might answer to mock the Jews with, and be thus labelled on a cross, in derisive comparison with Cæsar; but that the Crucified Jew would be exalted in the world far above all Cæsars was beyond the Roman's imagination. What was there in his world to suggest a spiritual king, so that he could recognize in that Sacred Figure, whom man despised and the nation abhorred, one who would yet command the world to care for the poor and the meek, to free the slave, and to provide for the sick, the forsaken, the defenceless, the insane, and even the criminal, and be obeyed with greater readiness than was ever accorded to the commands of an Augustus or a Tiberius? But what Pilate could not conceive was already foretold in the Old Testament. The Messiah was to be no warrior, but be light; no conqueror, but speak peace to the heathen; a lawgiver of the nations, but his knowledge and counsel is "in the fear of the Lord," and his discernment quick in religion. The universal peace of his days, when the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, shall not be the peace

¹ Isa. xlii. xlix.

² John xviii. 37.

of conquest, but because under him the knowledge of the God of Israel shall fill the earth as the waters cover the sea; and in proportion as the earth is so filled with that knowledge does the majestic answer of Jesus to the poor Roman become better understood.

In order, however, that Jesus should "fulfil the Scriptures" much more should be foretold of the Messiah than that he should be the light of the Gentiles, and extend the worship of Jehovah to the end of the world. Christianity, it is true, can point to the fulfilment by her of these prophecies, while Judaism has long wholly ceased to attempt their realization. But every advocate of Jesus, from the apostles themselves to the Christians of our own day, should be prepared, in addition, to show that "the Christ must needs have suffered."¹ Christianity without the Cross is nothing. The Cross was the fitting close of a life of rejection, scorn, and defeat. But in no true sense have these things ceased or changed. Jesus is still he whom man despiseth, and the rejected of men. The world has never admired Jesus, for moral courage is yet needed in every one of its high places by him who would "confess" Christ. The "offence" of the Cross, therefore, has led men in all ages to endeavor to be rid of it, and to deny that it is the power of God in the world. With each successive generation the prediction is renewed that society is soon to emancipate itself from the rule of Jesus, and acknowledge him only as a dead name, like that of Socrates. It is significant also, that, at present, the rule of God himself is so often coupled with that of Jesus as a restraint from which men are about to free themselves forever.²

Now, is the Great Rejection also Messianic?

History supplies an impressive commentary on this

¹ Acts xvii. 3, R. V.

² Ps. ii. 2.

question. The proofs from the Old Testament that both the strange story and the doctrine of the Cross were fully prophesied, without one omission, convinced more minds among those who heard the apostles than any of the proofs which we have so far adduced. The prophecy of the rejection was the sword of the primitive Church, and with justice; because it is impossible to ask for a greater sign, or surer mark of inspiration, than the Scripture which fully spoke of a rejected and dying Saviour. The reason is that no man could have thought this. A light of the world, a salvation of God to the ends of the earth, is not unaccountable as a generous aspiration of generous souls. But a despised, stricken, and slain Salvation of God is beyond accounting for, either as an aspiration or even as an idea. So certainly is this felt that scepticism labors harder to obscure the testimony of the Old Testament to a suffering Messiah than it does with any other feature of prophecy. But what says the Scripture?

The first intimation comes with the return of the Davidic line to little Bethlehem. It is not in the city of the great king that the King is to be born, but in the humble place of Jesse, from a buried root, which is all that is left of the once imposing tree of David. He shall not fail or be discouraged, is said of him, when it is also said that he should not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. This suggestion of seeming disappointment is further developed in the address to the peoples of the Western Isles. He has labored in vain and spent his strength for naught in his endeavor to restore Israel to God. In this work he has been a servant of rulers, one despised by men, and the abhorred of the nation. He it is, also, who learned a hard lesson from the Lord, so that he might speak a word in season to him that is weary. He gave his back to the smiters and his cheeks

to them that plucked off the hair; he hid not his face from shame and spitting, in a court where his adversaries thus stood against him. On this account would all who fear God, and who obey the voice of his Servant, comfort themselves when the darkness of death overtakes them, and not lie down in sorrow, like those who would dispel its gloom with lights of their own making.

This glimpse of the Servant undergoing a deep humiliation at the hand of oppressors in judgment¹ is the prelude to that great prophecy which, however it be sought to diminish its effect by explanations or glosses, yet still remains a more graphic description of Jesus before Caiaphas and Pilate than any of the narratives of the Evangelists themselves. This is not alone because the New Testament events are all in the prophecy, but because more history is also in the prophecy than it was possible for the contemporaries of Christ to know. We see now more than the apostles did then, but not more than the prophet.

Thus the prophet begins the announcement of the humiliation by an equally explicit announcement of the exaltation, and says of the Servant both that which Christianity says of the work of Jesus and that which history says of his person. He should prosper and be exalted and extolled, and be very high; the wonder and the reverence of the kings of the foreign peoples, the High Priest of many nations. But how shockingly marred in visage and form! The young tree-plant of Jesse would scarce be recognized in the insignificant-looking growth out of that unfriendly soil. Who would see the power, the arm, of God in him? Who would there be to admire him? For

¹ “He is near that justifieth me; who will contend with me? let us stand together: who is mine adversary? let him come near to me. Behold, the Lord God will help me; who is he that shall condemn me? lo, they all shall wax old as a garment; the moth shall eat them up.”—Isa. l. 8, 9.

he is despised and rejected of men : a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief ; he was despised and not esteemed, but regarded as a stricken outcast, wounded, bruised, and scourged with stripes ; oppressed, arrested, tried, brought to the slaughter, and put to death. Then was he numbered with law-breakers, and a criminal's burial appointed for him, though he had done no violence nor been a deceiver.

No more than in this passage, can the significance be evaded of the scene depicted in the Twenty-second Psalm, when it is found there also that he who experienced the bitterness of death at the hand of wicked enemies, on that very account would cause all the kindreds of the nations to return unto the Lord, with the praise of many generations. He who was a reproach of men and despised of the people ; surrounded by the assembly of the wicked, who mocked at his sufferings and his impotence as they gazed upon him ; whose bones were disjoined and his heart sinking with the thirst of death ; whose garments they parted among them by lot, after they had pierced his hands and his feet—he is yet to be the comfort of the meek, and the eternal hope of those who seek the Lord ; just as in Isaiah, because the Servant had poured out his soul unto death, he shall divide his portion with the great, and shall divide the spoil with the strong.

Nor does the return from the Captivity alter this strange feature of Messianic prophecy, but the rejection still appears as plainly in the utterances of Zechariah and in the warnings of Malachi. The Shepherd (who is also one with Jehovah) is scornfully prized by the nation as of no more value than a slain slave.¹ He is also that Righteous One, identified again with Jehovah, whom the nation had pierced and slain.² The Shepherd, who although no other than the fellow or neighbor of God himself, is yet smitten

¹ Zech. xi.

² Zech. xii.

by the sword.¹ Moreover, the ominous tone with which Malachi closes the word of prophecy shows that the relation of the nation and of its leaders towards the Messenger of the Covenant, when he should come, would prove a solemn crisis for both, such as, indeed, it did prove after the rejection.

So plainly, indeed, does the suffering Messiah appear in the prophets that, as we have seen, the Jews had no other course left to them than to allege that there would be two Messiahs; one to live a life of sorrow, humiliation, and defeat, ending in his being slain, while the other would be the victorious King. In no other way could they account for the clear and repeated predictions of the Rejected One. Inexplicable on any ordinary principles such a conception undoubtedly is; and it behoves those who, in modern times, would evade this testimony to explain how this conception came to be formed at all. Would an expectant people, longing for the appearance of their great King, describe him thus? Yet it is not by a single passage, or by a single prophet, that we learn that the Messiah must suffer, be rejected, despised, and slain, but in many different passages, and by different modes of statement; so that the explicit declaration of Daniel² that the Messiah would be killed, and the city and the temple be overwhelmed by a second ruin more disastrous than the first, might be left out of the account altogether but for the following reasons:

This prophet distinctly associates the violent death of the Messiah with the accomplishment of certain great ends; namely, the restraining of transgression in the world, the putting away of sin, the provision of reconciliation for iniquity, and the bringing into the world of an eternal righteousness. We have already adverted, in the preced-

¹ Zech. xiii.

² Dan. ix. 26; Zech. ix.

ing pages, to the embarrassment of those interpreters who endeavor to show that some other than Jesus is the slain Messiah of this passage. In truth, no one knows how to connect the death of any prince or king in history with any idea or association, however remote, of the restraining of transgression in the world, or of atonement for sin and the coming of an eternal righteousness, and hence no one attempts it.

It is just here, however, that the final and test question is put to the Christian advocate. Is not only the fact, but the doctrine of the Cross, that the blood of the Christ would be shed for the remission of sins,¹ foretold in the Old Testament? For even all the arguments which have preceded would fall short of complete demonstration if the Atonement be left out. Because, we ask, why has the world received the Messiah of the Jews? Is it because the European mind could not conceive the thought of the coming King for itself, and had to take him from the Jews? Or was it because the world found in the Rejected One of the Jews a greater teacher of virtue and a higher moralist than the European races could produce? Every candid man must admit that, as an historical fact, it was not so, but rather the preaching of the Atoning Son of God in Jesus, which constituted the Glad Tidings. It was the message of reconciliation with the Father by the Cross which converted the nations, and, hence, unless this be the word of Old Testament prophecy also, then its suffering and dying Messiah is not Jesus.

Every passage, however, which we have cited, which speaks of the Sufferer, also speaks of the reasons and the results of the suffering. The marred form and visage is joined with the blood of sprinkling. We esteemed him not, "but he was wounded for our transgressions, he was

¹ Matt. xxvi. 28.

bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. For the transgression of my people was he stricken. When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. By his knowledge shall my righteous Servant justify many, for he shall bear their iniquities. Because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors, and he bare the sin of many and made intercession for the transgressors."

Fully as unmistakable, also, is the testimony of the fifty-fifth chapter of Isaiah, which invites all men to their satisfaction in God. That invitation comes after the statement of the Atonement in the fifty-third chapter. The everlasting covenant, the sure mercies of David, which will cause the distant nations to flock to the Messiah, as he stands before the world its appointed captain and leader, is no other than that "the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." Thus, also, does the connection become clear between the mysterious sufferings of the speaker of the Twenty-Second Psalm, and the words: "all the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord, and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee." Further, in keeping with the order of prophecy, do we read in Zechariah that after the great mourning of the nation over the Pierced One, there shall be for it a fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness.

So far, therefore, it can be affirmed of Old Testament prophecy that it presents us, first, with the unique phe-

nomenon in history of a strong expectation, entertained by a small and obscure Asiatic people, that its exclusive religion would be adopted by all mankind. Though the nation itself was well-nigh lost in a universally polytheistic world, yet this assurance continued through century after century of national misfortune and trial, held in a truly Christian form, namely, that by peaceful means alone the worship of its one God would spread in the world until it became the "saving health of all nations." Secondly, that this great result would be brought about by its coming Messiah, who would be the light of the foreign peoples, and the salvation of God to the ends of the earth. Thirdly, that though he would become King of the world, and cause all war and strife to cease under his reign, yet the beginning of his career would be humble, and show no sign of his being the power of God in the world, for he would be despised, rejected, and finally be put to death. Fourthly, that his sufferings and death would be sacrificial, and thus procure reconciliation with God for sin, and secure an everlasting righteousness.

At this point it is surely legitimate to ask that the Great Argument be considered also from the side of history; because it is not a question of linguistic interpretation alone, which is to be settled by the scholarly exegesis of certain passages, or by the determination of the date and authorship of certain ancient writings. Rather, we may say, that if the question be, Does the Old Testament really foretell Christ and Christianity? then we need not trouble ourselves much about words, for it had to foretell altogether too much to have the decision seriously affected either way by the surmisings of literary criticism. Really to predict the place of Christ and of Christianity in the world it should presage the greatest facts in the story of mankind for nearly nineteen centuries, and this

it could not do if prophecy comes by word only. More than by words, and equally explaining its words, is prophecy evidenced by facts on a universal scale, facts which have influenced the destiny of the human race itself. What, for example, does such a fact as the continuance of Israel mean? What witness is there in the continued life of the Church through so many different ages?

Before us is modern Christendom in all its greatness, presenting within its pale the leading nations of the world, under the highest civilization yet attained in history, and all distinctively derived from the lightly esteemed Galilee of the Jews. How did this marvel occur? How came the strongest peoples and races of earth to fulfil to such an extent the words of prophet and of Psalmist, that they would turn unto the Jehovah of Zion? What human mind could have thought, much less foreseen, this in any age before the Babylonian Captivity? Human reason can work only with materials ready at hand; but what were the materials or circumstances in the times of a Tiglath Pileser or of a Nebuchadnezzar to suggest that Judah would outlast all kingdoms, and that the most distant nations would seek to learn the ways of Judah's God? But the holy men of God foresaw and foretold it all, at a period when nothing in the possible horizon of the times could have afforded the faintest indication of the wonderful future. To their minds, we see that the future is not as it is to other men, for they speak of the coming ages just as the ages indeed have come.

Corresponding also to the definite association in prophecy of the spread of the knowledge of Jehovah with the extension of the kingdom of the Branch of Jesse is the historical fact of the Church of Christ. The kingdom of Jesus is one with the kingdom of God, and it has been by the preaching of Christ alone that the nations have turned

to Jehovah. But how came the Church both to enter and then to continue upon her wonderful career of triumph over the destructive agencies of many different ages, until her survival is even more wonderful than that of Israel in its long dispersion? The irrefutable answer is, that the vitality of the Church is in the Cross. The mighty impression which the Crucified has made in the world is not because by the Cross he became a good example, or a good memory, like any of the sages who are dead, for the Cross then would have been no more than the poison-cup of Socrates. The simple historical fact is, that the nations turned unto the Cross, and unto God, because of the belief that Jesus, the Son of God, was wounded for our transgressions, that he was bruised for our iniquities, and that the chastisement of our peace was upon him, when his soul was made, on THE CROSS, our offering for sin.

All these considerations, however, go to make up historical arguments, and, as such, count among the external evidences of Christianity. But there are deeper connections between the doctrine of Christ and the spirit of the Old Testament. Jesus came to lead men into the kingdom of Heaven, that deathless world wherein dwelleth righteousness. Hence the great concern between Christ and men is the relation to God of each individual during his earthly journey, and at that journey's close. Every other concern of earth, therefore, sinks into utter insignificance by the side of this. The Lord, both in life and at death, is worthier than father or mother, or wife or child, or lands and possessions. Common-sense tells us so, for it is impossible to think of a more important relation to us than that of the Leader through this troubled world into the rest eternal, where we shall see God. How insignificant, then, becomes the kingdom which the Jews wished, when they rejected the kingdom which is not of

this world; nay, more, how little does the mere outward growth of Christianity, or the greatness of the Church in history, or any external fact, even though it be a fulfilment of prophecy, appear—how little of Christ is there in all such things compared with the revelation in him of “the power of the world to come”! What are we to compare with that inheritance, through him, of an endless life, in which we can never do wrong nor be imperfect, so that God can safely enrich us with all the good of his universe?

Now, when we turn to the Old Scriptures, a deep, serious tone meets us everywhere, which we feel at once distinguishes them from all other ancient writings. There is a spirit pervading which is not of this world, and we know it. We meet throughout with a recognition of righteousness as the aim of human life, because otherwise there can be no life with the Scriptures’ God. It is difficult adequately to express the significance of this fact, because it cannot be ascribed to a human intuition, for no other race felt deeply enough to appreciate the fundamental need of righteousness. The Greeks were an intensely human people, but how stood their gods to righteousness? What recognition was there in Greek life of the portent of sin, when there was no real word in the language for sin till Christianity came to add the meaning to an old term? Nor can the Talmud of the Jews themselves claim any true community of spirit here with the ancient Scriptures, for the infinite value of goodness so imbued the thought of the Old Testament that the whole conception of the relation of the Messiah to the world corresponds to it, which is not the case with the Talmud. This it is which explains why the Messiah of the Old Testament never descends to the earthly hero. His name in prophecy is not the Lord our Master, but the Lord our Righteousness.

His kingdom leads us into no association with worldly greatness, but rather always upwards, and at last to the right hand of the Majesty on High, where he appears as our High Priest forever to procure our acceptance with God.

But as the conception of an earthly king gives place to a heavenly, the whole subject of Messianic prophecy acquires a new and wider significance. The Eternal High Priest and the kingdom which is to have no end, not only conduct our minds far away from narrow historical interpretations and questions about words, but suggest a great extension of the area of prophetic instruction. God is then seen to have ordered all things from the beginning, to reveal the blessed relation of the Son to us. The whole ancient Word thus becomes prophetic, not only in its poetry, but also in its history, and even in its geography. The entire story of the people of God in Egypt and in the Wilderness then becomes one great scenic representation for the Christian's instruction and consolation. The birth into the kingdom of Pharaoh; the bondage; the salvation from it by the blood of the spotless lamb; the God-provided leader, mediator, and lawgiver; the march homewards through the desert, ever under God's protection, and with life depending on the daily descent of food from heaven; the trials of faith, the murmurings, the rebellions; the brazen serpent; the withdrawal of the lawgiver when the crossing of the narrow river was all that remained of the journey; the standing of the first Joshua in that stream, above the Dead Sea, until the last of the people had gone over; and, finally, the restoration to the old native land—what are all these but prophecies of the deep things of God and of Christ? Nor does the lesson end until it shows us that God has not made man in vain, but according to a great purpose has shaped his destiny

towards that glorious consummation when he will swallow up death in victory, and will wipe away tears from all faces; "when the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads."¹

¹ Isa. xxxv. 10.

THE END.

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